

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE MAHAYANA,  
INFINITE LIFE, ADORNMENT, PURITY,  
IMPARTIALITY, AND ENLIGHTENMENT  
SUTRA

A TRANSLATION OF KEY CHAPTERS WITH CASE STUDY

EDITION II

佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經精簡英文版

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### **DEDICATION OF MERIT**

**May the merits and virtues accrued from this work  
repay the kindness of my Mother, Father and Elders  
and relieve them from their sufferings.**



**May my Mother, Father and Elders  
bring forth the heart  
of understanding and compassion and,  
at the end of this life,**



**be born together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.**

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## FOREWORD

This is the second edition of the Translation of Key Chapters with Case Study of Upasaka Xia Lian Ju's compilation version of the Infinite Life Sutra. Since the first edition was published in 2014, additional chapters were translated in order to create an edition that captured the full essence of the Sutra

Furthermore, in addition to the newly re-edited version of the case study of Venerable Hai Xian's Pureland rebirth, several important commentaries, articles and illustrations have been added to give readers a more complete understanding of the context and principles of this Sutra.

For instance, important excerpts and illustrations from works such as the Jade Record , Shurangama Sutra and the Ershisi Xiao have been included. These additions are in accordance with Ven. Master Chin Kung's philosophy, which combines Mahayana Pureland teachings with Confucian and Taoist values, thus creating a comprehensive curriculum that reflected the methods of the Ancient Sages.

Moreover, this edition also features translations of two historical accounts that document the supreme benefits of protecting life and practicing vegetarianism. The importance of protecting life cannot be overstated. Currently, hundreds of billions of animals die painfully each year just to gratify the desires of a few billion people. According to the 安士全書 (a collection of Sagely texts by Upasaka An Shi), as soon as the karmic seeds caused by the killing of animals mount up to the maximum—wars, violence and vandalism will occur across society. Hence, the merits resulting from protecting life are boundless and very potent. If these merits are then sincerely dedicated towards rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, rebirth there is assured.

This edition also includes a translation of Mahasthamaprapta's Treatise on Perfect Enlightenment Through Mindfulness of Amitayus. This treatise is a must read for anyone wishing to understand the mechanics behind single-minded recitation of Amita Buddha's name. Lastly, a new translation of Patriarch Yin Guang's Exhortation (one of the most important tracts in Buddhism) is included at the end.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SUTRA

The Buddha Speaks the Mahayana, Infinite Life, Adornment, Purity, Impartiality, and Enlightenment Sutra (佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經) is the central text of the Pureland school. This Sutra represents the Buddha's highest wisdom and succinctly outlines the way to achieve Bodhi within one life.

The Buddha spoke the Infinite Life Sutra five separate times over the course of his life. Thus, there were originally five versions of this Sutra. However, the eminent Upasaka Xia Lian Ju (夏蓮居居士) compiled all five versions into one version without changing or discarding a single character during the early to mid 20th century. This compilation version is now the universally accepted version of the Infinite Life Sutra. Furthermore, The Venerable Master Chin Kung (淨空法師) has stated that this Sutra is the most important one of our time and the only one that he would recommend.



**Upasaka Xia Lian Ju**



**Venerable Master Chin Kung**

The Venerable Master Chin Kung has also stated that it requires unmatched stocks of merit to be able to study Upasaka Xia Lian Ju's Infinite Life Sutra and witness Venerable Hai Xian's Pureland rebirth. As this Sutra was not widely circulated until a few decades ago, our generation is certainly the most fortunate generation since the Buddha's appearance. Therefore, we should know that it is our destiny to make use of our gifts and single-mindedly seek rebirth in Pureland.

**Namo Amita Buddha!**

## CHAPTER 4: THE ORIGINS OF DHARMAKARA

### Sutra:

**The Buddha said to Ananda: "Innumerable kalpas ago a Buddha named Lokeshvararaja appeared in the world. Having attained Unsurpassed Bodhi, he was worthy of offerings. Furthermore, countless sentient beings were brought to the shores of liberation through his perfect wisdom. For forty-two kalpas, he spoke the true Dharma to both devas and men."**

**"At that time there was a valiant sovereign named King Universal Bountiful. Having heard the Dharma, he rejoiced and ignited his resolve for Bodhi. Seeking the Way, he renounced his crown and became a mendicant named Dharmakara (Treasury of the Dharma). Owing to his peerless wisdom and matchless strength of will, Dharmakara mastered the Bodhisattva Way with effortless ease. Upon meeting the World Honored-One, he reverently prostrated before Lokeshvararaja Buddha. The Bhikshu then uttered verses praising the Buddha's glorious countenance and expressed his aspiration to create the Land of Ultimate Bliss. A land that will serve as a pure and permanent paradise for the benefit of all sentient beings throughout the ten quarters."**

### Commentary

Beginning from this chapter, the Buddha starts to explain Amita Buddha's path to Bodhi and the origins of Pureland. Innumerable kalpas (eons) ago Lokeshvararaja Buddha appeared in this world to teach the Dharma. He guided sentient beings for a total of forty-two kalpas. According to the Venerable Master Chin Kung, the total length of time a Buddha speaks the Dharma is about half the average contemporary human life expectancy. This means that the average lifespan of an individual during the time of Lokeshvararaja Buddha was no less than eighty kalpas! As lifespans are determined by past merits and current virtues, the people who lived during Dharmakara's time undoubtedly possessed exceptionally good karma. Thus, we should realize that the fruits of doing good are boundless and everything we seek can be obtained by diligently amassing merits.

Although the Chinese text of Dharmakara's praises and aspirations are much longer, the details basically reflect the last realization of the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra:

**The Eighth Discernment is this: The Samsara is a raging inferno plagued by endless afflictions. Hence, resolve upon the Mahayana aspiration to liberate all beings. Vow to bear the unbearable for the sake of helping sentient beings achieve ultimate bliss.**

The Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra is a text that outlines the motivations of those who seek Sagehood. The first few realizations represent the wisdom of those seeking only personal liberation (i.e. Arhats) while the latter are the insights of Bodhisattvas. The eighth and last is the highest realization where the Bodhisattva not only fully understands the pains of the Samsara, but also wishes to selflessly save all the innumerable beings still trapped within the cycle.

Dharmakara's aspiration to create the Land of Ultimate Bliss mirrors this highest realization. Hence, Dharmakara's Great Compassion for sentient beings cannot be exceeded. This is why Shakyamuni Buddha stated in the Amitabha Sutra that all Buddhas praise Amita Buddha as the foremost among them. In Chapter 5 (not translated), Lokeshvararaja Buddha recognizes Dharmakara's noble aspirations and thus showed him the way to Unsurpassed Bodhi. He also explained to him the various positive and negative aspects of all the innumerable world-systems in existence. With this knowledge, Dharmakara was able to proclaim his 48 Vows in the presence of the Buddha's august assembly.

Dharmakara's Pureland is basically an amalgamation of all the positive aspects of every world-system and Buddha-land in the universe, but without even an ounce of the negative qualities. Simply put, it is a land of unsurpassed security, bliss and perfection. Rebirth there is easily attainable for any sentient being who wishes to do so. No one is refused entry. Once reborn in Pureland, Bodhisattvahood is immediately attained and Buddhahood is guaranteed to be achieved within a short span of time. Thus, rebirth in Pureland means instant enlightenment. In fact, it took Dharmakara many maha-kalpas of deep meditation in order to create such a wonderful land.

Lastly, reciting this Sutra is very meritorious. It is standard practice for those practicing Pureland Buddhism to recite the 48 Vows (Chapter 6) during the morning recitation session and chapters 32-37 during the evening recitation session.



## CHAPTER 6: THE FORTY EIGHT VOWS OF AMITABHA

### **Introduction:**

The following vows represent the cornerstone of Pureland Buddhism. They signify Amita Buddha's promise to all sentient beings—be they devas, humans, insects, microbes, ghosts or hell beings. As the Buddha has confirmed that Dharmakara attained Buddhahood ten kalpas ago (he is now Amita Buddha), all of the following vows are now valid in perpetuity. Lastly, any reference hereinafter to "the Way" or "Dharma" etc. generally refers to the Dharma-door of Pureland Buddhism.

### **Sutra Vows 1-2 : The Vows of No Evil and Suffering**

**"If I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, my Buddha-land will be adorned with infinite and inconceivable merits. There shall be no hell beings, emaciated ghouls, wild beasts, pests and pestilences in my land. Sentient beings arriving to dwell in my land, even from the hells or evil paths, will all share my merits and become Bodhisattvas at once. They shall never again fall back into the states of suffering. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 3-5 : The Vows of Equal and Majestic Appearances**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all sentient beings from the ten quarters who are reborn in my land shall assume majestic appearances as august as Tyrian purple and as fair as the finest gold. They will be regal in countenance and possess all of the Buddha's 32 fine features. Furthermore, their bodies will be upright, pure and without outflows. The splendor of their appearances shall all be equal. If some are handsome while others hideous, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 6-8: The Vows of Clairvoyance and Clairaudience**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all sentient beings who are reborn in my land will have the Divine-Ear and Buddha-Eye. They shall, without limit, be able to recall all of the good and evil habits of their innumerable past lives. Also, their acuity and powers of postcognition and precognition will be unlimited. Every event occurring across the ten directions will be known to them. Neither the slightest sound nor the faintest sight will escape them. Until these vows are**

fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

**Sutra Vow 9: The Vow of the All Knowing Heart**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all sentient beings who are reborn in my land shall be able to see through the hearts and minds of each and every being living across the incalculable and inconceivable world-systems. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

**Sutra Vows 10-11: The Vows of Transcendental Powers and Limitless offerings**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all sentient beings who are reborn in my land shall be complete with perfect ease and the six transcendental powers. Furthermore, they will be able to instantly manifest anywhere they desire and make offerings simultaneously to innumerable Buddhas across the ten directions. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

**Sutra Vow 12: The Vow of Samadhi and Perfect Wisdom**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all sentient beings who are reborn in my land shall be bestowed with Samadhi that will free them from outflows and attachments. They will all become irreversibly established on the path towards perfect wisdom (Bodhi). Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

**Sutra Vow 13-14: The Vows of Infinite and Serene Light**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, my light shall shine brightly across the ten directions. When I appear before sentient beings— as soon as my light touches them—they shall feel bliss as their afflictions dissolve. They will immediately be reborn in my land. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

**Sutra Vow 15-16: The Vows of Infinite Life and Incalculable Populace**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all sentient beings who are reborn in my land shall have infinite life. Even if an entire congregation of as many Paccekabuddhas as there are living beings in a great trichiliocosm should spend

**hundreds of thousands of kalpas trying to calculate the lifespan of any one of the countless Sages in my land—a figure would still be unreachable. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

**Commentary:**

A finite lifespan is one of the greatest threat to those seeking Bodhi. This is because death and rebirth dampens the momentum of their cultivation. For instance, if a diligent cultivator suddenly died and was reborn as a deva, he would likely become so distracted by his impermanent newfound luxuries that he could no longer concentrate on seeking liberation. If he was reborn as a human (womb born), it would take him some time to grow up and refresh his roots of wisdom. However, rebirth in Pureland guarantees infinite life. As all beings who are reborn in Pureland become Bodhisattvas due to Amita Buddha's blessings, they have naturally far transcended the Samsara and the pains of birth and death. With infinite life and the exalted environment of Pureland, Unsurpassed Bodhi can be easefully attained.

**Sutra Vow 17: The Vow of Universal Recognition**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all the Buddhas across the ten quarters will join in unison to praise the infinite merits of my name and the peerless virtues of my Buddha-land. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

**Commentary:**

According to Venerable Master Chin Kung, the name of Amita Buddha represents the names, teachings and combined merits of all the Buddhas across the ten quarters. Hence, this is why all the Buddhas across the ten quarters commend Amita Buddha and his Land of Ultimate Bliss.

**Sutra Vow 18: The Pureland Rebirth Upon Ten Recitations Vow**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, sentient beings of the ten quarters who joyously and single-mindedly seek rebirth in my land after hearing my name—wholeheartedly dedicating all their merits towards this aspiration with each new thought—will be reborn in my land upon reciting my name for ten times. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

**Note:** The Chinese text includes an exception for those who slandered the Dharma or committed the five grave offenses. However, Vow 21 contradicts this prohibition. Hence, this contradiction means that this exception was meant only as a warning to prevent people from committing such heavy evil offenses. As long as they repent, Pureland will certainly accept them with open arms.

### **Sutra Vows 19-20: The Resolve For Bodhi Vow and the Vow of the Sagely Welcoming Party**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, sentient beings of the ten quarters who resolve to attain Bodhi in my land after hearing my name, who subsequently dedicate all the merits and virtues from their lifelong practice of the Six Paramitas towards this aspiration, and who single-mindedly recites my name through day and night without cease, will meet me during their last moments. I shall welcome them into my land while surrounded by an august retinue of Sages. They will instantly become Mahabodhisattvas. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 21: The Vow of Forgiveness**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, there would not be one virtuous and willing sentient being who could not easily attain rebirth in my land. However, if sentient beings who have long committed evil repent after hearing my name, and thereafter adheres to the Buddhadharma while yearning for rebirth in my land, then such beings will be saved from the evil paths and rise to my land upon their deaths. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 22-24: The Vows of No Womanhood and the Vow of the Lotus Bud Transformation**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, the retribution of womanhood will not exist in my land. If women who loathe the burdens of their gender become sincerely resolved upon attaining Bodhi in my land after hearing my name, then they shall be transformed into Bodhisattvas upon such a rebirth. Sentient beings of the ten quarters who are reborn in my land will be transformed while dwelling in palatial lotus buds floating upon the glistening waters of the Seven Jeweled Lagoon. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

**Commentary:**

Sentient beings who are reborn in Pureland will become Bodhisattvas by transformation. This means that if you achieve such a rebirth, you will instantly manifest as an enlightened Bodhisattva. There is no pain of birth or inconvenience of growing up in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

**Sutra Vows 25-27: The Vows of Good Karma and Virtue**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, sentient beings of the ten quarters who are inspired by my name to sincerely cultivate the Bodhisattva Way shall be respected by both men and devas. Moreover, sentient beings who merely hear my name will be reborn as virtuous aristocrats possessing wealth, knowledge and auctoritas. Their bodies will be healthy and complete. Lastly, they will enjoy cultivating the highest Dharma. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

**Commentary:**

These vows represent the most basic benefits of reciting Amita Buddha's name. Simply hearing or perceiving this name will guarantee a good rebirth and future opportunities to learn Buddhism. Furthermore, in the Contemplation Sutra, it is stated that just one recitation of Amita Buddha's name can eradicate eight billion eons worth of heavy karmic offenses. Hence, those who fail to achieve Pureland rebirth despite having recited the name will still amass enormous stocks of merit.

**Sutra Vows 28-31: The Vows of Virtue, Purity, Detachment and No Outflows**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, my land will be free from even a hint of evil. All sentient beings who are reborn in my land shall be united in proper virtue and purity. They will be forever free from afflictions and attachments. Moreover, they will enjoy the same bliss as a bhikshu without outflows. If residents of my land should retain false thoughts and attachments to the body, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 32-34: The Vows of Incorruptibility, Eloquence and Expoundance**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, those who are reborn in my land will all possess infinite good roots. Hence, their bodies shall be as incorruptible as the Buddha's. They will also have radiant halos above their heads. A affirmation of their infinite wisdom and eloquence. Thus, they will naturally expound the Dharma like clockwork. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 35-36: The Vows of Swift Perfection**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, sentient beings of the ten quarters who are reborn in my land shall swiftly attain Buddhahood. Excepted are Bodhisattvas who have made Mahayana vows to liberate beings across the ten quarters. Using various expedient devices, they will unfailingly inspire sentient beings to bring forth faith in the teachings of Samantabhadra. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 37-38: The Vows of Abundance and the Receipt of Offerings**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, sentient beings who are reborn in my land shall be instantly furnished with whatever food, drink, attires and requisites that they wish for—no one will be left unsatisfied. If those dwelling in my land shall seek to make offerings to Buddhas across the ten quarters, rich offerings will instantly appear before all the Buddhas of the ten quarters as a response to that thought. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vow 39: The Vow of Infinite Augustness**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, all aspects of my land shall be infinitely well adorned and be of indescribable beauty. Even though the residents of my land are clairvoyant, they will still be unable to describe the infinite beauty of my land. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

### **Sutra Vows 40-41: The Vows of Jeweled and Mirrored Trees**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, the jeweled trees of my land shall be hundreds of thousands of yojanas in height. However, the Bodhi trees next to the**

Way places will be even taller. No Bodhisattva of my land would fail to perceive this. Those who wish to view the august lands of other Buddhas may do so by simply gazing at the jeweled trees, and what they seek will appear as clear as one's reflection in a mirror. Until these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

#### **Sutra Vow 42: The Vow of Resplendence**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, my land shall be boundlessly expansive and as bright and unblemished as a gleaming mirror. Its light shall pervade warmly across the ten quarters. Any sentient being who can see this light will become irreversible upon the path towards Bodhi. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

#### **Sutra Vow 43- The Vow of Widespread Treasures and Fragrances**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, everything in my land, from the ground to the skies above, such as the lagoons, arbors, rivulets, villas, halls and pavilions, shall all be composed of untold treasures and scented woods. The fragrances of my land will saturate the entirety of the ten quarters. Any sentient being who can sense it will become resolute in cultivating the Dharma. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

#### **Sutra Vow 44-45: The Vows of Samadhi and Buddha Offerings**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, Bodhisattvas of the ten quarters who hear my name will immediately gain the Samadhi of purity, release and equality. They shall dwell in the highest Samadhi until they become Buddhas. They will also make offerings to countless Buddhas while meditating. Unless these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

#### **Sutra Vow 46-48: The Vows of Dharani, Patience and Non-Retrogression**

"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, Bodhisattvas from other worlds who hear my name will immediately become Mahabodhisattvas. They shall abide in equality and dwell in purity, impartiality and perfect wisdom. Lastly, they will instantly reach the state of Avivartika and attain the three stages of endurance. Unless these vows are fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."

## **CHAPTER 14, 15, 16 & 17 : THE JEWELLED TREES, BODHI TREES, WAY PLACES AND THE MERITORIOUS RIVERS, PONDS AND LAGOONS**

### **Sutra (Chapter 14):**

**"Arising from the golden soil of the Land of Ultimate Bliss are countless magnificent jeweled trees. Some are composed of gold or silver while others are made from crystal, elegant cast glass, amber, imperial jade or agate. Each of these trees are purely composed of one type of treasure. However, other jeweled trees are made from two, three or even seven types of precious jewels and treasures. For instance, some trees may have cameo glass bodies, agate berries and crystal blossoms. Others such as the seven jeweled trees may have golden roots, silver trunks, cast glass branches, crystal twigs, amber leaves, imperial jade petals and agate berries. There are innumerable seven jeweled trees of various combinations in the Land of Ultimate Bliss."**

**"Furthermore, the jeweled trees of Pureland are not only composed of exquisite treasures—but are also completely balanced and perfectly symmetrical. Even the twigs, flowers, berries and leaves are uniformly well formed and proportioned. The glorious aura and warm radiance of these trees are of indescribable beauty. Moreover, whenever pleasant breezes gently ruffle the leaves, it is as if an celestial concerto grosso is being masterfully performed. Divine music naturally emanates from these wonderful jeweled trees."**

### **Sutra (Chapter 15):**

**"In addition, there are grand Bodhi trees next to the Sermon Pavilion. These Bodhi trees are four million Han miles in height and five thousand yojanas in circumference. The crown of each tree covers a radius of two hundred thousand Han miles. Composed purely of countless gems and adorned with multitudes of jeweled blossoms and berries, their warm radiance naturally pervades boundlessly."**

**"Furthermore, wish-fulfilling jewels of various colors such as emerald, ruby and ivory—the foremost of all precious stones—are used prominently as decorative wreaths. The jeweled trunks are wrapped with ribbons made from celestial stars while bells composed of gold and pearls adorn the branches. Moreover, rare and supremely wonderful jeweled meshes adorn the canopies. The hundreds of**



thousands of divine colors compliment each other to create a glorious aura of majestic and infinite brightness. What a marvelous sight! Such augustness reflects the purity of those who dwell in Pureland."

"When delightful breezes ruffle the leaves and twigs, countless divine sounds of Dharma immediately fill the air. Exquisite, elegant, enlightening and refreshing, these sounds are the foremost of all the sounds across the ten quarters. Anyone who merely sees a Bodhi tree, hears its sounds, tastes its fruits, breathes in its fragrant scents, comes into contact with its august brightness or contemplates its merit will attain Avivartika Bodhisattvahood. Immediately, they will be freed from outflows and afflictions. Moreover, they will become irreversibly established on the path to Unsurpassed Bodhi and attain the three stages of endurance.

"The Buddha said to Ananda: "The rare flora of Pureland turns the Dharma Wheel and creates Buddhas. They exist because of the infinite merits and powers of Amita Buddha and his great vows."

#### **Sutra Chapter 16:**

"In the Land of Ultimate Bliss, the Sermon Pavilion and the other structures are also composed of the same exquisite jewels that make up the trees. Furthermore, numerous ornately carved webbed panels and screens—all decorated with white pearls and wish-fulfilling jewels— adorn the splendorous Pavilion and surrounding architecture. The gilded halls, grand villas and celestial palaces of the Bodhisattvas are similarly well adorned and of unmatched beauty.

Moreover, the Bodhisattvas of Pureland are constantly cultivating with great diligence. Some are speaking the Dharma while others are accepting and listening to it. Some may cultivate Zen or Vajrayana while effortlessly suspended in the air. Protected by Amita Buddha's merits and vows, all of them easefully progress through the various stages of Sagehood and soon attain Unsurpassed Bodhi. They joyfully cultivate in accordance with their wishes."

#### **Sutra Chapter 17:**

"Moreover, the Sermon Pavilion, halls and palaces are all surrounded by divine streams, ponds and lagoons. These bodies of water are perfectly proportioned in

accordance with their surroundings. Some are ten yojanas, twenty yojanas or even hundreds of thousands of yojanas in size, depth and length. The waters are pristine, fragrant and endowed with the eight meritorious virtues. These glistening waters are always sweet, soft, serene, light and clear. They can wash away every affliction and defilement. On the banks and beaches are numerous sandalwood trees and arbors bearing auspicious fruits. They are divinely radiant and diffuse perfumed fragrances. Moreover, their long elegant branches and lush bejeweled leaves form lovely shades above the azure lagoons. The marvelous aromas produced by such flora are simply undreamed of. When gentle breezes ruffle the branches, auspicious blossoms and berries fall gracefully into the waters. They drift along the gentle ripples and exude untold fragrances."

"These rivers and lagoons are all adorned with the seven types of gems. The river beds are carpeted with golden sand. Furthermore, multitudes of exquisite lotus flowers and water lilies— utpalas, padmas, kumudas and pundarikas—of various rich and celestial colors, adorn the surface of these divine bodies of water. Their vivid complexions and stunning brightness pervades across the entire surface."

"If a Bodhisattva of Pureland chooses to bathe one of these jeweled rivulets, ponds and lagoons, the water will obey their every fancy. If they wish for the water to rise to their ankles, it rises to their ankles. If they wish for it to rise to their waists, it rises to their waists. If they wish for it to rise to their necks, it rises to their necks. If they wish to be completely immersed, it will spontaneously pour over their bodies. If they wish for it to recede, it will immediately recede and leave them as dry as before. Additionally, if they wish for cool water, it will turn cool. If they wish for warm water, it will turn warm. If they wish for the rapidity of the water to change, it will change in accordance with their wishes. These meritorious waters exist only to serve. It comforts the body, eases the mind and washes away the six kinds of dust. It is so pure that it appears formless and so clear that the brightness of the aurulent river bed shines forth from all depths. These delightful and enticing waters swirl gently in graceful overlapping circles."

"Furthermore, the mild waves produce countless wonderful and soothing sounds. Depending on one's wishes, one can hear the sounds of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha or of the paramitas. One may hear the sounds of stillness and purity or the sounds of what neither arises nor ceases to be. One may also hear the sounds

of the Ten Strengths of Valor or the sounds of Non-abidance. The sounds of Great Compassion, loving kindness, empathy and equanimity or the anointing of the crown of wisdom with divine nectar may also be heard. Once these sounds are heard, the roots of virtue quickly mature and the heart becomes pure, unattached, upright and impartial. Everything that one hears is in accordance with the Dharma. One alone hears what one wishes to hear and does not hear what one does not seek to hear. One can neither retrogress from Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi nor retreat from the heart of Bodhi."

"Sentient Beings of the ten quarters who are reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss will be spontaneously transformed while dwelling in palatial lotus buds floating upon the glistening waters of the Grand Seven Jeweled Lagoon. They instantly obtain radiant bodies that are pure, ethereal, formless and without outflows. They will never again hear even a whisper of terms such as anxieties, burdens, evil realms and the kleshas. Thus, if there exists not even the notion of suffering, how could there be any actual suffering?"

"On the other hand, the sounds of bliss are ever present in Pureland. This is why it is called the Land of Ultimate Bliss."

## **CHAPTER 19: A DREAM COME TRUE**

### **Sutra:**

**"Furthermore, sentient beings who have been, will be or are about to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss will all possess wonderful golden bodies and majestic appearances. Their wisdom and merit will be unlimited. Additionally, they will have perfect ease and transcendental powers. No one is left wanting and everything is plentiful. Elegant palaces, rich ornaments, exquisite flowers, perfumed incense, lush streamers, plush canopies and various other beautifully adorned requisites all arise spontaneously on demand."**

**"When nourishment is sought for, alms bowls made from seven different kinds of gems will immediately manifest as a response. Divine food, nectar and refreshments of a hundred flavors will appear in sumptuous quantities and disappear when not needed. However, no one actually consumes these aliments. Instead, upon perceiving the profound insight of Dharma's gourmet flavors, they dine only on the pure thoughts resulting from their observation. Therefore, they are naturally immortal, refreshed and delighted. They have no attachments to food and drink. What's more, those who dwell in Pureland wear divine tunics and togas woven from soft jeweled threads. Their coronets, laurel wreaths and ornate accessories are likewise composed of numerous precious stones. With such august adornments, their bodies naturally exude infinite light and a myriad of splendorous colors."**

**"Moreover, the various aspects of their palatial abodes—such as the size, shape or location—are all customized in accordance with their wishes. For instance, some palaces are terrestrial and surrounded by tranquil pools of divine water while others glide among the stars. Furthermore, all residences are adorned with ornate and bejeweled domes. Countless bells composed of precious stones also lend their splendor to these heavenly palaces and villas. The colors and brightness of such elegant celestial dwellings are naturally glorious. Such purity, bliss and peace arise in response to nothing more than a thought. Thus, no one could be unsatisfied."**

## CHAPTER 24: THE THREE GRADES OF ASPIRANTS

### Sutra:

The Buddha said to Ananda: "Devas and humans of the ten quarters who sincerely seek to be born in Pureland can be classified into three grades. The highest grade of aspirants are those who willingly leave their homes and abandon temporal desires to join the Sangha as monks. Having ignited their resolve for Unsurpassed Bodhi, they single-mindedly recite Amita Buddha's name. They dedicate their vast stocks of merit—the fruits of practicing the Vinaya—towards rebirth in Pureland. When their lives draw to a close, Amita Buddha will appear before them while accompanied by an august retinue of Sages. At once, they will be born in Pureland by transforming spontaneously from within lotus buds composed of the seven types of jewels. They will attain the state of Avivartika, attain steadfast wisdom, and be capable of freely exercising the six transcendental powers. For this reason, Ananda, sentient beings who wish to see Amita Buddha during their lifetime should awaken aspiration for Unsurpassed Bodhi, single-mindedly recite his name, and dedicate the resulting merits towards Pureland rebirth."

"The middle grade of aspirants consists of those who have resolved to attain Unsurpassed Bodhi but could not leave the home life to become monks. Nevertheless, they diligently recite the name of Amita Buddha with deep concentration. They also amass merits by doing many good deeds. For instance, they create Buddha images, give alms to monks and build Stupas. They also observe the eight precepts and make offerings of light, incense, flowers and the like. They dedicate their stocks of merit towards the fulfillment of their vows—to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. At the time of their death, Amita Buddha will appear before them in his transformation body, which is fully possessed of the same radiance, physical characteristics and features as those of the real Buddha. He will also be accompanied by a host of Sages. Once reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, they will enter the state of Avivartika. Their virtue and wisdom will be next to those of the higher grade of aspirants."

"The lower grade of aspirants consists of those who cannot do many meritorious deeds. Nevertheless, they seek Unsurpassed Bodhi and recite the name of Amita Buddha with great concentration. When they hear the profound Dharma, they joyfully accept it and do not harbor any reservations. They sincerely aim to be

**reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. When they are about to die, they will see Amita Buddha in a dream and be welcomed into Pureland. Their merit and wisdom will be second to those of the middle grade of aspirants."**

**"If those who have slandered the Dharma and committed the five grave offenses can repent at the moment of death and recite the name of Amita Buddha for one to ten times, then they too can be reborn in Pureland and attain irreversible Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

## CHAPTER 25: THE IDEAL ASPIRANT ELABORATED

### Sutra:

**"Furthermore, Ananda, virtuous men and women who reverently cultivate this Sutra through day and night by reciting, studying, copying, worshipping and disseminating it can aspire for rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Besides, they also diligently and unfailingly observe the Vinaya or the five and eight precepts. They dedicate their merits to the peace and prosperity of all sentient beings. Additionally, they never cease their mindfulness of Amita Buddha and his Pureland. Such persons will meet Amita Buddha and his retinue of Sages during their final moment of life. Once in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, their appearances will be the same as Amita Buddha's and they will summarily abide in Non-abidance."**

**"Also, Ananda, as for those sentient beings who wish to ascend to Pureland but can neither cultivate with great diligence nor flawlessly practice high wisdom and Dhyana Samadhi— their hopes lie with the ten virtues. They must not kill, steal or indulge in lustful excess and depravity. They must guard their tongue and refrain from lies, profanity, ridicule, gossip, divisive speech and cajolery. Furthermore, their hearts must not be infested with avarice, wrath and faithlessness. Through day and night without cease, they shall be mindful of Amita Buddha and contemplate the merits and augustness of his Pureland. With single-mindedness, they shall take refuge in Amita Buddha ; prostrate and make offerings to him. When the lives of such persons draw to a close, they will not be afraid or anxious. Their hearts will be clear and unconfused. Swiftly, they will attain rebirth in Pureland."**

**"Aspirants who are weighed down by worldly matters to the point that they are unable to become monks, unceasingly hold the eight precepts and attain single-minded purity should cultivate in accordance with what I am about to say."**

**"During their spare time, they should straighten their hearts and minds, curb their desires and remove anxieties. They must always strive to hold compassionate thoughts in the place of greed, miserliness, wrath, envy and jealousy. Furthermore, they should be charitable and refrain from gluttony. They must never doubt or allow their commitment to waver. Moreover, they**

**must be respectful, sincere, trustworthy, loyal and filial towards their parents. They must believe that the Buddha's words are profound and that good deeds result in blessings and rewards. These instructions must be sincerely observed without fail. "**

**"Moreover, they ought to ponder deeply on how to leave the Samsara. They must always contemplate on Amita Buddha and vow for rebirth in his Pureland. Also, they should eke out spare time amounting to ten consecutive days and nights per year or one day and night per month. For the full duration of this period, they are to cultivate unceasing mindfulness of Amita Buddha."**

**"When the lives of those who follow these instructions end, they will be reborn in Pureland and attain Bodhisattvahood."**

**"Everyone who attains rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss will instantly reach the stage of Avivartika and possess the aurulent 32 features of the Buddha. They will soon attain Unsurpassed Bodhi. While there might be a slight difference in regards to the timing of the achievement of Buddhahood by these Bodhisattvas, no one will fail to achieve it swiftly. Afterwards, whenever and wherever a Buddha is needed, they will respond by manifesting in accordance with the wishes of those desiring to be liberated."**

**"Ananda, all the Buddhas of the ten directions agree with what I have just said. They praise in unison the merits of Amita Buddha, the Tathagata of Infinite Life."**



## CHAPTER 32: THE UNLIMITED BLISS OF PURELAND

### Sutra:

**The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: "The Bodhisattvas in the Land of Infinite Life have immeasurable merit and wisdom. The wonders and bliss of Pureland are simply unimaginable. All there are virtuous and cultivation of the Way occurs naturally. Whether making offerings to Buddhas or listening to Dharma talks, the Bodhisattvas of this land do so with matchless aptitude, unwavering diligence and great joy. Thus, their wisdom and resolve can only increase with each passing moment. Even if they appear to be leisurely, eager diligence unmistakably influences them from within. They are all of the same compassionate mind and spirit.**

**As they dwell in Non-abidance, the appearances of these Bodhisattvas are naturally august. Always self-reflective, their hearts are forever clean and pure. Because they are free from greed and defilement, these Bodhisattvas unwaveringly cultivate mindfulness of Amita Buddha. Their vows cause them to be steady in their faith. Like calm waters, there are no ripples in their poise and confidence. Never influenced by wrong views, they strictly adhere to the sutras and never stray. Because they are constant in their admiration for the ultimate aim of Unsurpassed Bodhi, they have no other thoughts. Being free from afflictions and defilements, they are unburdened and naturally act in accordance with the Buddha-nature. Their minds are as devoid of false thoughts as a vacuum is of matter. Contented and without attachments, they diligently fulfill their Mahayana vows. With Great Compassion, they empathize with the sufferings of the unenlightened. Hence, they teach this Dharma-door of Amitabha in accordance with the customs and inclinations of the various audiences, thereby facilitating easy acceptance and understanding."**

**"These Bodhisattvas swiftly obtain Unsurpassed Bodhi and then help others do the same. Once Bodhi has been achieved, they realize everything and fully comprehend the original purity of the self nature. They also realize that all dharmas are rooted in the self nature. Thus, they recover a natural and unsurpassed brightness which shines across the entire Dharma realm. They are now Buddhas."**

**"Everything in the Land of Ultimate Bliss is naturally composed of treasures and**

**jewels that far surpass the seven types of gems found in the pleasant continent of Uttarakuru. As there are no limits to the merit of Amita Buddha, the august brightness of the Land of Ultimate Bliss and the grandeur of its manifestations are simply incomparable. The Bodhisattvas of Pureland fully understand the Tathagata's perfect wisdom."**

**"Thus, all of you should diligently seek rebirth in Amita Buddha's Land of Infinite Life and Ultimate Bliss. Blessed by the vows of Amita Buddha, you can effortlessly leave the Samsara. The evil realms will collapse behind you as you immediately attain Bodhisattvahood. Pureland rejects no one and is very easy to reach, but few actually go there. By letting go of worldly affairs and attachments, you can reach Pureland and enjoy limitless bliss and infinite life. Thus, is there any reason to remain greedily attached to this miserable and impermanent world?"**

## CHAPTER 33 : THE BUDDHA'S EXHORTATION TO SENTIENT BEINGS

### Sutra:

"People of this world all hanker after matters of little importance. Thus, they must toil and slog under an oppressive atmosphere of evil and suffering. Whether rich or poor, patrician or plebeian, young or old, male or female, they are all worried about the future and tormented by the past. Shackled by desire, they cannot rest. For instance, those without dwellings yearn for them while those without land wish for it. All seek to gain or retain wealth, family and servants. If they have one they feel they lack the other. These people of feeble merit are forever afflicted. If they should by some chance amass all that they wish for, impermanence will visit them in the form of wars, disasters, bandits, creditors, extortionary governments and karmic enemies. Overwhelmed by sorrow over their losses, they become consumed by obstinate loathing. Unable to let go, all that they care for are torn from them upon their deaths anyway. This causes them to suffer ceaseless pain and anxiety. Such misery does not discriminate between aristocrats and paupers."

"People of this world, fathers and sons, brothers and sisters, husband and wives, kinsmen and relatives, must all love and respect each other. They should refrain from hatred, envy and jealousy. Moreover, they must mutually assist each other without thoughts of stinginess. They ought to treat each other with tact and politeness."

"When interacting with others, we must know that even a small disagreement now may escalate into a mass of enmity in the lives to come. Thus, we should be cautious. Those who antagonize and humiliate others will eventually be reborn together with their victims and suffer their vengeance."

"Moreover, amidst temporal desires and attachments one is born alone and dies alone. The departed transmigrate to either a painful or to a pleasant state of existence. Each receives individual karmic retributions that no one else can bear in their place. Once a person has been reborn in a different realm due to his own karma, he can no longer meet or remember anyone he once knew. Since everyone's path of rebirth is uniquely tailored to their own habits and deeds, it is impossible to tell the time of their reunion."

**"Knowing this, is there any reason not to diligently cultivate virtue while you are still youthful and strong? Why wait?"**

**"People of this world are confused about good and evil. Their faith in the laws of karma are weak. Hence, they tenaciously cling to their own delusions. Being foolish, they reject the Dharma and embrace wrong and deviant views. Their upside-down ways trap them within the Samsara. As they seek only instant gratification, they are addicted to hatred and gripped by lust and avarice. Isn't that pitiable?!"**

**"Because their forefathers were evil and rejected the Dharma, there is no one to teach it to them now. Thus, their lack of understanding of the Buddha's perfect wisdom is forgivable. However, as they even reject the basic laws of karma and rebirth, they are completely consumed by absurd and incorrect views."**

**"The workings of karma are like gravity, invisible but all pervasive. Look around you, fathers inevitably shed tears for their deceased offspring while children weep over their late parents. Siblings and couples all become grief stricken when the one they love is lost. They do not know that their attachments are false and impermanent. Consumed by love and emotion, they are shackled to the Samsara. Consequently, they squander their years and neglect to diligently and properly cultivate the Dharma. Few become Sages while many drown in their own delusions."**

**"Because they harbor malicious intent, they tumble from darkness to deeper darkness. They indulge their caprice and defy the will of Heaven and Earth. Injustice and vice inevitably follow and will run unchecked until evil karma accumulates to the maximum. As their original lifespans have been shortened by their evil deeds, they will soon meet death and fall into the hells for eons without end."**

**"Contemplate what I have just said and refrain from all evil. The virtuous understand that love and glory cannot be kept and bring only suffering. Thus, they strive diligently to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Once there, their happiness is unlimited and everlasting. Those who choose their passions over the precepts will inevitably fall behind everyone else."**

## CHAPTER 34 : A HEART OF WISDOM

### Sutra:

**The Bodhisattva Maitreya exclaimed: "World Honored-One, your words teach the precepts and illuminates the path towards virtue. You kindly help everyone rise to Unsurpassed Bodhi. You are the King of Dharma and the foremost of all Sages. Your light shines warmly and your perception is unlimited. You are the teacher of both devas and men. Today, we rejoice in the wonderful teachings of Infinite Life. Our hearts have been opened by your wisdom. "**

**The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: "Those who respect the Buddha gather vast stocks of merit. They repay the Buddha's kindness by single-mindedly reciting Namó Amita Buddha. By doing so, they remove all doubts and deracinate the six kinds of dust. Thus, attachments and afflictions leave them forever. Having become Sages, they are no longer bound by death and rebirth. These Bodhisattvas respond to the pain and suffering of the unenlightened. Hence, they freely manifest wherever they are needed to teach the Dharma to those who have not yet been liberated."**

**"All of you should know that the people of the ten quarters have been turning in the wheel of suffering since time immemorial. Their afflictions are never-ending. Being born and growing old are both painful ; sickness and death are equally agonizing. No one can obtain true happiness while trapped in bodies tainted by all kinds of foul odors and impurities. Only by cleansing the heart of the three poisons will such suffering dissipate. Thus, be not slothful. Make sure that you are sincere in thought and action. Refrain from putting up hypocritical facades. Strive to be quickly reborn in Pureland so you can liberate others. Sincerely make such vows and accumulate the virtues needed to fulfill them. However hard a life of diligent cultivation may be, it can only be for a short while. Afterwards, you will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss and enjoy perpetual joy there. Birth and death can never trouble you again as you are permanently free from the afflictions of the three poisons. With infinite life, you can effortlessly attain Unsurpassed Bodhi. So I bid you all to single-mindedly seek such emancipation. Do not entertain any doubts while practicing lest you be reborn in the bejeweled borderlands of Pureland where you will be made to wait in the lap of luxury for five hundred years."**

**The Bodhisattva Maitreya said: "World-Honored One, all of us accept your**

teachings and we will all diligently and single-mindedly cultivate in accordance with it. Do not worry as we will not doubt!"

## CHAPTER 35 : THE FIVE EVILS

### Sutra:

The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: "A person who remains virtuous at heart and upright in thought while residing in this world is the foremost of all people. Why? Because virtue is actually widespread across the ten quarters. Thus, sentient beings of the ten quarters are very easy to convert. This, however, is not the case for this world. Amidst countless afflictions, all of you live among the five evils. Having become a Buddha in this world, I endeavor to teach everyone to forfeit the five types of evil conduct. If you do so, you will be free from the burning pains that are the result of such evil. By forsaking evil, the five precepts can be held and merits will accumulate."

"I will now explain the five types of evil conduct in detail."

### First Evil: The Root Offense of Killing

"People of this world are driven to kill by their desires. The strong abuse the weak and the victorious massacre the defeated. They hunt, slaughter and devour. Thus, karmic retributions naturally follow. That is why some are orphaned, poor, lonely, wicked, blind, disfigured, deaf, mute, deranged, weak, deformed or crude. They had rejected virtue in their past lives and refused to be charitable. The fundamental truth is that nobility, wealth, courage, grace, wisdom and eloquence are the result of kindness and filial piety. Only merits and good deeds can yield such wholesome results."

"Moreover, the retributions of karma continue after death. The souls of the malicious inevitably fall into the evil realms of suffering. Perhaps some will be reborn as hell beings, wild beasts, pests, maggots or emaciated ghouls. Those who commit evil will suffer misfortune in this life and the hells in the next. Once you fall into the evil realms, you will cycle there for endless kalpas. You cannot hope to leave until your evil karmas are rectified. Such pain and misery are indescribable. Between Heaven and Earth, there is naturally justice. Even though consequences may not be immediate, rewards inescapably shadow the virtuous while retributions naturally pursue the wicked."

### **The Second Evil: The Root Offense of Thievery**

**"People of this world defy the rules of propriety. They are proud, shameless and rapacious. Furthermore, they revel in decadence and cause outrage. They abuse their authority and engage in corruption. Likewise, they punish the innocent and scheme against the virtuous. Hypocritical and manipulative, they seek to defraud others. Regardless of their station in life, they are all united by a deceitful heart."**

**"Being contemptuous and foolish, they are naturally self centered and full of avarice. Thus, they viciously vie for personal benefit and act dishonorably. Widely hated, their greed and disregard for the laws of karma eventually drives them and their families to ruin. Even if they are wealthy, a miserly and uncharitable heart still grips them. Greedily attached to their wealth, they toil in mind and body to retain it. However, they must part with all that they have accumulated upon their deaths. Only our merits or offenses are truly ours."**

**"Because they are selfish, they slander virtue instead of praising it. Being full of envy and always desiring to steal, they seek for themselves the benefits that justly belong to others. Demigods record each of their offenses as they repeatedly plunder and exploit. Thus, it is expected that they should fall into the evil realms where unspeakable pain and suffering will torment them for eons without end."**

### **The Third Evil: The Root Offense of Lust**

**"People of this world have short lifespans and must rely on reciprocity to live. However, wicked people pay no heed to this impermanence and are always full of immoral intentions. They are dissolute and full of lust ; their appearances reflect their perversions, which also consumes them. Furthermore, they squander their patrimonies on vice and transgress the bounds of decency with their depravity. They willfully neglect to fulfill their duties and to do good."**

**"Moreover, their lust often drives them to engage in wanton violence or to form mobs, bandit gangs and armies. They plunder and loot to satisfy the needs of their wives or concubines. Lastly, their debauchery causes their victims to hate them and the public to despise them."**

**"Demigods and Spirits keep records of their evils. Once their lives end, they are**

cast into the three evil paths where unlimited afflictions and unspeakable suffering awaits them. With such heavy evil karma, can they ever hope to gain release?"

#### **Fourth Evil: The Root Offense of Capricious Speech**

"People of this world rarely think of doing good. Instead, they utter abusive and sarcastic words. They lie, mock, cajole and spread rumors. Using evil or untrue words, they turn people against each other and cause strife. They hate good people and ruin Sages. Being conceited, they treat their teachers with arrogance and fail to be filial towards their parents. Their friends cannot trust them due to their lack of sincerity."

"Arrogant and self absorbed, they consider themselves to be virtuous heroes. Using force to prop up their authority, they abuse others and demand obedience. Such persons are hard to convert as they never self reflect. Luckily for them, they may have done some act of goodness in lives past and can now count on that small amount of merit to protect them. However, their unceasing caprice soon eradicates whatever merit they still have. When their lives end, all their evil suddenly manifest and recoils upon them. Demigods have kept detailed records of their many crimes and the workings of karma naturally forces them into the evil realms. They have no chance of escape as their bodies are cast into boiling tar and crushed into pieces. Suffering extreme torment, they finally regret their sins. However, it is already too late."

#### **The Fifth Evil: The Root Offense of Intoxication**

"People of this world are often slothful. They cannot be bothered to do good or cultivate virtue. Their parents try to change them but they respond with scathing words and rebellion. Weeping in sorrow, their parents regret begetting them. Such persons feel no gratitude for their parent's kindness and are never filial. They are wastrels who squander their days on idle pursuits. Being lazy, they drink themselves to drunkenness and feast on sumptuous food. As they are quarrelsome and loutish, they conduct themselves boorishly and without decorum."

"Their callousness causes them to show no concern for the welfare of their family and relatives. Furthermore, they are indifferent to the sacrifices their parents



have made for them and show no sincerity towards their friends and teachers. Throughout their lives, they are evil in action and evil in speech. They even fail to entertain one single upright thought. Rejecting the Dharma and refusing to believe in the laws of karma and rebirth, they seek to harm Sages and cause schisms and chaos within the Sangha. They consider themselves to be wise despite being extremely deluded. Never do they wonder about where they are going to after death. Even though they are neither humane nor respectful, they expect long and happy lives. When kind people try to teach them the laws of karma, they respond with mockery and abuse. Their hearts and minds are as obstinate as rocks. On the eve of death they find that they have no merits to count on. Filled with fear as hellish flames surround them, they painfully regret having not done a single good deed."

"Between Heaven and Earth, the good and evil paths of rebirth are clearly distinguishable. The rewards for virtue and punishments for vice are as unavoidable as one's shadow in the sun. However, woe and weal are interlinked. For example, those flush with fortune often become complacent while those who are afflicted often become faithful towards the Dharma. Hence, we must be vigilant."

"Those who perform good deeds enjoy pleasure after pleasure and become wiser with each passing day. On the other hand, those who commit evil suffer endless misfortunes and fall further and further into the darkness."

"If you can realize this truth, you have truly heard my teachings. The delusions that cause the Samsara are only fully known by the Buddhas. Even though I tirelessly teach people these truths, few take heed of my words. Thus, the existence of the evil realms and the Samsara continues without cease. As the people of this world refuse to stop committing evil, the workings of karma naturally forces them into the evil realms where immeasurable anguish awaits them. They must bear indescribable pains for life after life and kalpa after kalpa, with no end in sight. Only with great difficulty can they gain release. These are the burning pains that engulf those who commit the five evils."

"If in the midst of all this, you are virtuous, upright in deed and thought, honest in speech and sincere in doing good and shunning evil, then with the merits and virtues acquired you will naturally attain bliss. You can also cultivate the Way to Unsurpassed Bodhi— just reward for holding the five precepts."

## CHAPTER 36 : THE PAINS CAUSED BY THE KLESHAS

### Sutra:

**"The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: I again urge you all to avoid the five evils and the burning pains that accompany them. The sufferings of the evil realms lie ahead of those who refuse to do so. In this world, some who have committed evil may become bedridden with incurable illnesses. Ensnared in a limbo between life and death, their efforts to gain relief are all in vain. Thus, they are a living example of the immediate consequences of evil deeds. After dying in pain, they fall into the three evil realms."**

**"Karmic feuds are perpetuated by acts of violence. The seeds for future carnage are often planted over minor things. As people are greedy for love and wealth, they are possessive and uncharitable. Gripped by passion, they feel no concern for moral principles. Motivated by delusions and avarice, they become selfish and hanker after personal gain. When they are rich and powerful, they become complacent and enjoy themselves at will. As they are impatient and apathetic towards the task of accumulating merits, their pomp and power are short lived. Good and evil both have distinct consequences that always unfold. Once they do, those who have for so long done as they please will be filled with unspeakable fear as their souls descend into the evil realms. Do not doubt what I have said."**

**"Now that I have elaborated in detail the true nature of the Samsara, you should all ponder deeply. There is nothing to enjoy in this world and certainly nothing you can truly keep. Hence, each of you must strive hard to practice virtue for the rest of your lives. Honor the Sages and respect the virtuous. Let mercy, humaneness and tolerance be your guide. You must seek Bodhi— thus uprooting the three poisons that fuel the Samsara for good. By doing so, you will be eternally freed from the pains of the three evil realms."**

**"Of all good deeds, which is the foremost? The answer is that rectifying one's heart and mind is the greatest good. Your body can commit no evil if your heart is pure. Do this and you will be in accordance with all that which is good and virtuous. Those who silence their desires cannot transgress the rules of morality. What they see and speak of are always harmonious. Furthermore, they are careful and proper in demeanor. Those who conduct themselves in accordance with their own passions will meet only failure and regret. A steady hand on the**

tiller can only come from patience."

## CHAPTER 37 : A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

### Sutra:

"You should all widely amass supreme causes pertaining to Sagehood. Do not break the precepts and always be patient and diligent. Be compassionate and single-minded in cultivation. If you can hold the eight precepts for a day and night, the resulting merits will surpass those derived from cultivating in the Land of Ultimate Bliss for an entire century. Why? Because the residents of Amita's Buddha-land are naturally virtuous. There is not even a hair's-breadth worth of evil there."

"In fact, if you practice virtue in this world for ten full days, the merits derived will surpass that of cultivating elsewhere in the Samsara for a whole millennium. The reason is that the other worlds are naturally pleasurable due to the superior virtue and merit of their inhabitants. Thus, there are no grounds for committing evil. Conversely, the world we reside in has little good but plenty of evil. People here are harassed by scarcity and must toil for a living. In addition, the food and drink here are toxic and bitter. The evil habits of this world increases with each passing day."

"Ever since my attainment of Bodhi, I have indefatigably expounded the Dharma to all who would listen. I exhort all of you to accept, study and cultivate in accordance with my instructions. I also urge you all to follow and accept the entirety of my teachings. Furthermore, each of you should spread what I have said to the public. Teach it to the young and old, to men and women, and to your friends and family. Let the Wheel of Dharma turn."

"In your own practice, you must always be strict with yourself. Always self-reflect and act in accordance with reason. Be optimistic, filial, humane, just and dutiful. Speedily correct your faults and always strive to eliminate evil habits while increasing virtuous ones. You should never tolerate your own offenses. By cultivating the precepts and the Dharma, you are like a pauper who has finally obtained limitless wealth. Moreover, neither regret nor lament because the future is all that matters. Sweep away the six kinds of dust and the wisdom of Bodhi will naturally show."

**"Anywhere a Buddha goes, whether to a state, a city, or a hamlet, people will be converted and brought towards the Way. All the lands beneath the stars will be serene and harmonious. The Sun will shine bright and the Moon will be clear. Pleasant breezes and timely rains will be the norm. Plagues and calamities will not occur. Society will be prosperous and peaceful. Soldiers and arms will be of no use. Virtue will be revered and humaneness cherished. All will feel compelled to cultivate etiquette and deference. Society will be free from thieves and bandits. There will be neither grievances nor miscarriages of justice. The powerful will not exploit the weak. Everyone will naturally be satisfied and content."**

**"The compassion I feel towards sentient beings far exceed a mother's love for her children. Having become a Buddha in this world, I use virtue to overcome vice. I also uproot the pains of birth and death. As I have become one with the five virtues, I now ascend towards my parinirvana. However, after I am gone, my teachings will be slowly twisted and misunderstood. Eventually, the ever increasing karmic obstacles of this world will cause my teachings to become lost. With nothing to guide them, future generations will drown in their own evil habits. Society will be plagued by chaos and the evil realms will overflow with evildoers. As you have now heard the Dharma, you must do your best to spread these teachings. You must strictly observe the precepts and uphold the sutras."**

**Bodhisattva Maitreya joined his palms and said: "The evil habits of the people of this world match your descriptions perfectly. World-Honored One, we will never forget your kindness. We fully accept your words of wisdom and will wholeheartedly strive for rebirth in Pureland. We shall never stop until Bodhi has been obtained!"**

## CHAPTER 38: PURELAND SHOWN TO CONGREGATION

### Sutra:

**The Buddha said to Ananda: "If you wish to witness the Buddha of Infinite Purity, Equality and Wisdom as well as the attendant lands of Bodhisattvas and Sages, then sincerely prostrate towards the west and single-mindedly recite Namo Amita Buddha."**

**Ananda quickly arose from his seat, joined his palms and faced the west. He prostrated and declared: "Today, I wish to see the Land of Ultimate Bliss and Amita Buddha—to revere, make offerings and cultivate roots of virtue!"**

**At that time, Amita Buddha appeared in full view. His body was vast and august ; his countenance regal and upright. Like a golden colossus rising from the sea, his enormous and majestic form rapidly eclipsed the entire universe of countless world-systems. In addition, the Buddhas of the ten directions all became visible as well. The multitudes of Buddhas were seen ceaselessly praising and admiring Amita Buddha's numerous virtues and merits.**

**The Venerable Ananda said: "The Land of Ultimate of Bliss is a place like none other! I have already sought and attained rebirth there—I am now a Bodhisattva of Pureland."**

**The Buddha replied: "Those who attain rebirth there have met countless Buddhas in their past lives. They have also accrued abundant stocks of merit. If you wish to reach the Land of Ultimate Bliss, you must single-mindedly take refuge in Amita Buddha."**

**As the Buddha spoke, Amita Buddha let out a supreme and infinite light from his palms. This light enveloped all the innumerable world-systems belonging to the multitudes of Buddhas, making them plainly visible to the assembly. Every single detail of those worlds— such as the Adamantine Mountains, snowy peaks, whitewater rivers, dense forests and celestial vimanas—became clearly visible to everyone due to Amita Buddha's pure and glorious light. Akin to sunlight illuminating the Earth. Even the dismal realms of the ghouls, hell beings and animals were also visible under Amita's golden light. His aurulent colored brightness filled up the entire universe like a great flood consuming the world.**

**Needless to say, the radiance of a Buddha naturally outshines the halos of Bodhisattvas and Shravakas.**

**The monks, nuns, upasakas, upasikas, devas, celestial dragons, yakshas, asuras, kinnaras, mahoragas, gandharvas, garudas, humans and non humans that formed the Buddha's congregation all witnessed the magnificent and august splendors of the Land of Ultimate Bliss with their own eyes. They also saw Amita Buddha in his jeweled pavilion. He was seated upon an ornate settee composed of fragrant lotuses. His upright appearance naturally exuded virtues and radiated merits. Sages and Bodhisattvas could be seen reverently attending to him. He was like the King of Mount Sumeru, a pure and shining beacon surrounded by the calm and meritorious waters of the vast ocean. Untainted by anything strange, evil or impure but adorned with countless treasures and surrounded by Sages.**

**Ananda and those present were so jubilant that they proceeded to prostrate before Amita Buddha with their heads touching the ground. Sincerely, everyone recited Namo Amita Samyaksambuddha. The multitudes of men, devas and even the little insects all benefited greatly as Amita Buddha's light enveloped them. All of their sufferings, anxieties and afflictions ceased completely at that moment—swiftly replaced by bliss and compassion.**

**Devas promptly made wonderful offerings of celestial bliss. With elegance and poise, they masterfully played their heavenly mandolins, clarinets, harps and clavichords. The atmosphere soon resounded with exquisite and ethereal music. Moreover, multitudes of gods and goddesses were seen scattering fragrant incense and flowers across the skies out of awe and veneration.**

**Due to the limitless powers of the Buddha, a land hundreds of thousands of kotis of nayutas away was seen in plain sight on the Saha world. Those who have the Buddha-Eye can still witness this sermon and scene in a future time.**

## **CHAPTER 41: OBSTACLES TO MEETING THE BUDDHA (PARTIAL)**

### **Sutra:**

**..... The Bodhisattva Maitreya asked: "Why is it that some people of this world who cultivate good cannot seek rebirth in Pureland?"**

**The Buddha said to Maitreya: "Such people are of little wisdom. They foolishly prefer the bland pleasures of the impermanent heavens over the supreme bliss found in Pureland. Thus, they do not vow for rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss."**

**Bodhisattva Maitreya asked further: "How can persons with such delusions and aversions expect to be saved from the Samsara?"**

**The Buddha replied: " These people are unable to collect merits without becoming attached. As they cultivate virtue only to obtain worldly happiness, they have no interest in the Buddha's profound wisdom. On account of their good deeds, they will be reborn as aristocrats or devas. However, they cannot leave the Samsara. Even though their parents, spouses, children and relatives strive to bring them towards the Way, their wrong views and attachments make such efforts futile."**

**"Furthermore, there exists another class of people who are even more deluded. These people may do some good and are interested in my teachings. However, they are deceived by their own worldly intellect and eloquence. Thus, they entertain wrong views and slander the Dharma. They edit, reinterpret and twist it in accordance with their own false views. Hence, they are unable to achieve liberation from the Samsara."**

**"Lastly, there are people with excellent roots of virtue who diligently amass vast stocks of merit. However, they are attached to the skandhas and very sentimental. Thus, even though they seek liberation, they still fail to do so. Such persons can only liberate themselves by cultivating with the wisdom of Non-abidance. By leaving behind attachments and aversions, their hearts and minds become calm. This allows them to successfully seek rebirth in Pureland."**

## CHAPTER 42: BODHISATTVAS ARRIVING IN THE LAND OF ULTIMATE BLISS

### Sutra

The Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the Buddha: "How many Bodhisattvas of this Saha world and the various Buddha-lands are currently on the verge of rising to Pureland?"

The Buddha replied: "In this Saha world, there are seventy two thousand million Bodhisattvas who have already made offerings to countless Buddhas and amassed ample stocks of merit and virtue. Thus, they are destined for the Land of Ultimate Bliss. However, this figure does not account for the countless junior Bodhisattvas who have cultivated accordingly and are likewise destined to go there."

"In fact, what I have just said is also true for the worlds beyond the Saha world. For instance, eighteen kotis of nayutas of Bodhisattvas from the world of the Far-shining Tathagata have just manifested in Pureland. In the Northeastern direction, nine thousand million Bodhisattvas from the world of the Jeweled Treasure Tathagata have also reached Pureland."

"Furthermore, anywhere from hundreds of millions to tens of thousands of millions of Bodhisattvas from the collective worlds of the Infinite Sound Tathagata, Brightness Tathagata, Celestial Dragon Tathagata, Tathagata of Triumph, Simha Tathagata, Defilement Free Tathagata, Foremost Virtue Tathagata, Sovereign of Mercy Tathagata and Glorious Banner Tathagata will all follow suit. The twelfth Tathagata is named Unsurpassed Glory. In his world, there are innumerable multitudes of wise and valorous Bodhisattvas who have already waited upon countless Buddhas. Exercising great diligence and vowing for the Dharma, they will rise to Pureland within seven days. Thus, they effortlessly acquire the assured Dharma that eminent Sages have cultivated for hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas."

"As for the name of the thirteenth Tathagata, he is called the Tathagata of Fearlessness. In his world, there are seventy nine thousand million Mahabodhisattvas and countless junior Bodhisattvas, bhiksus and the like who are about to enter into the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Incalculable multitudes of Bodhisattvas from countless worlds across the ten quarters are streaming into the Land of Ultimate Bliss as we speak."



## CHAPTER 43: THE EPITOME OF THE GREAT VEHICLE

### Sutra:

**The Buddha said to Maitreya: "the aforementioned Bodhisattvas now reap the boundless fruits of their profound cultivation. Likewise, If virtuous men and women can briefly rejoice, take refuge and show respect after hearing the name of Amita Buddha, their merits and rewards will be equally great. Their hearts are free from arrogance and baseness. Thus, they promptly perfect their roots of wisdom with unceasing diligence and single-minded cultivation. Such persons represent the epitome of the Mahayana ideal and are the most exalted of all my disciples."**

**"All devas, men, asuras and so forth must cherish this Dharma-door and diligently cultivate it. Give rise to the rare and profound resolve to attain Bodhi in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Let this Sutra guide you and be your teacher. In turn, you will help countless sentient beings speedily advance to abide in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. They will yearn to witness the boundlessly adorned Buddha-lands. Those of perfect and complete merit are diligent in studying and cultivating this Dharma-door. You must never waver or entertain doubts while seeking such profound Dharma. Even if you must soldier through a raging inferno, you must neither dither nor regret. Why? Because countless crores of Bodhisattvas all seek to cultivate this magnificent Dharma-door. They reverently hear it and never turn their backs on it. In fact, there are many Bodhisattvas who are unable to hear it despite their constant efforts. Thus, cherish this Dharma-door and do not allow the rare chance you now hold to slip away."**

## CHAPTER 44: EXPERIENCING BODHI

### Sutra:

**"Even in a future time when the proper Dharma no longer flourishes, there will still be some sentient beings who diligently reinforce their stocks of merit and wisdom. We should know that such people have already made offerings to countless Buddhas in their past lives. Hence, they are blessed by all of those Buddhas. These blessings allow them to obtain, completely accept and cultivate this supreme and most profound Dharma-door. In due course, they will attain perfect wisdom and thereby understand the boundless sapience contained within this Sutra—obtaining true bliss in the process of doing so. Moreover, they will spread the teachings of this Sutra far and wide and delight in unceasing cultivation. Good men and women who are acquainted with this Sutra or will be can reap supremely positive benefits."**

**"You must all entrust yourselves to this Sutra and entertain no doubts. Reinforce your stocks of merit and diligently cultivate virtue. Do not allow your own slothfulness, attachments and reservations to bog you down. Always remember that the temptations of the Samsara and the six kinds of dust are odious hindrances—they are nothing but shackles impeding your freedom!"**

**"Maitreya, only masterful cultivators of great merit can produce this uniquely exalted Sutra. It is the foremost of all Dharma-doors — sourced directly from the Buddha-nature. Because this Sutra is rare and often ignored, the Bodhi resolve of hundreds of millions of cultivators now dither and waver as temptations and provocations overwhelm them."**

**"If persons can hand copy, accept, recite, make offerings to and or teach and propagate this Sutra —and if their faith never dithers and their mindfulness of Amita Buddha is unceasing— then they are irreversibly established upon the Way to Unsurpassed Bodhi. During their last moments — even if the entire great trichiliocosm were to be doused in flames — they can still transcend it and reach the Land of Ultimate Bliss! Such people have reverently made offerings to countless Buddhas in their past lives and are thus well acquainted with Bodhi. All the Tathagatas praise such persons in unison. Thus, you should all faithfully and diligently accept, cultivate and propagate this Sutra."**

## **CHAPTER 45: THE LAST REDOUBT OF THE DHARMA**

### **Sutra:**

**The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: "Today, I speak this Sutra for the benefit of all sentient beings. Besides, everyone can now meet the Buddha of Infinite Life and witness every detail of his glorious land with their own eyes. All who sincerely seek this Dharma shall have it. However, do not squander this opportunity and end up floundering amid doubts after my parinirvana."**

**"In the Dharma extinction age—when the last of my teachings perish and evil flourishes—I will use my powers to protect this Sutra and allow it to last for another hundred years. People who feel joy upon encountering this Sutra and who do their best to cultivate in accordance with it will be able to realize their dreams—no matter what those aspirations may be."**

**"The appearance of a Buddha is rare and meeting a Thus Come One is even harder. The various sutras spoken by the Buddhas are hard to obtain and difficult to hear. Those who can cultivate in accordance with the proper teachings are even rarer. However, If a person can joyfully hear and accept this Sutra and cultivate in accordance with it, then such a person has accomplished a task of unsurpassed difficulty."**

**"People who hear the name of Amita Buddha or this Sutra and as a result become pure and compassionate or so moved that they may even shed tears of bliss are not common people. They have cultivated Buddhist teachings in the past. On the other hand, persons who feel deep doubt upon hearing the Buddha's name and who have no faith in the sutras are people who have just been reborn from the evil paths. The wicked habits that have tainted them for so long have not yet dissipated. Thus, their hearts remain consumed by doubt and they are unable to transcend the Samsara in this life."**

## CHAPTER 46: EXHORTATION TO CULTIVATE PERSEVERINGLY

### Sutra:

**The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Maitreya: "This Sutra is the highest Dharma taught by the Buddhas and Sages. It is the profound Dharma of the fearless, unhindered and unattached. It is also the foremost of the Mahayana Prajnaparamita teachings. This Sutra is hard to meet and difficult to understand or explain. Furthermore, it is even more difficult to faithfully cultivate in accordance with it."**

**"Today, I speak this profound and wonderful Dharma-door in the most suitable manner possible. I do not speak more than you can comprehend or less than you deserve. The multitudes of Buddhas all praise this sermon. I now entrust this Sutra into the care and protection of the Bodhisattvas, Arhats and Paccekabuddhas present in this assembly. I do so for the benefit of the countless beings who are still afflicted by passions. To prevent them from continuing to turn in the Samsara and suffer such excruciating pains."**

**"You shall all cultivate in accordance with what I have taught you. Be pious, filial and always feel grateful for the kindness shown by your teachers. You must help ensure that the Dharma does not disappear by prolonging it with your own sincere cultivation. You must never violate or discard the precepts and the principles of the Dharma. Furthermore, you must all understand that you are not at liberty to replace or discard the words and characters of the sutras. You must cultivate single-mindedly in order to attain Bodhi swiftly. What I say now I have already done myself. The conduct of the Buddhas and Sages are to be emulated. Thus, collect merits and cultivate goodness by rectifying your heart. Finally, seek rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss."**

### Commentary:

The Chinese translations of the Mahayana sutras were translated by monks who were actually Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Hence, the Traditional Chinese versions of the sutras are superior to the original Pali or Sanskrit versions. Chinese is the profound language of Non-abidance and no other language can describe Buddhist wisdom like it does. Each character has insightful meanings that far exceed the face value. Thus, this is why the Chinese characters of the sutras cannot be changed. It is also why Upasaka Xia Lian Ju did not alter or discard a single character of this Sutra.

## CHAPTER 47: THE STANZAS OF MERIT AND WISDOM

### Sutra:

**The World Honored-One then spoke the following stanzas:**

**Those who seldom accrue merit and wisdom,  
Cannot appreciate the proper Dharma.  
Only by having made offerings to countless Tathagatas,  
Can one faithfully rejoice in this Dharma.**

**The wicked, arrogant, deluded and slothful,  
Have no faith in the Thus Come One's profound Dharma.  
They are like blind men,  
And blind men cannot lead the way.**

**Those who have planted roots of virtue,  
With Innumerable Buddhas past,  
Will save the world,  
By preserving and protecting the true Dharma.**

**Upon hearing this Dharma,  
Accept, recite, copy, praise and teach it,  
Act it out and make offerings to it,  
Advance towards Pureland with one heart.**

**Resolve for rebirth in the Land of Amitayus,  
Even if the universe were to be doused in flames,  
You shall still retain faith,  
For the Buddha will guide you to safety.**

**The boundless and profound wisdom,  
That the Thus Come One holds,  
Is only known by other Buddhas,  
Even after contemplating for eons without end,  
Shravakas still cannot know it,  
And those with divine powers find it out of their reach.**

**The merits of such profound Dharma,  
Can only be spoken by the Buddhas,  
Human rebirth is hard and difficult to get,  
And he who faithfully hears the wisdom of this Dharma,  
Is the rarest of the rare.**

**Those who are sincere upon the Bodhi path,  
Can surpass Samantabhadra and reach the other shore,  
And those who are fond of speech, debate and knowledge,  
Should learn humility and develop true faith in my teachings.**

**As you have now heard this magnificent Sutra,  
Never cease to joyously recite Amitabha's name,  
Accept it and use it to convert others,  
Do so and all the Buddhas will say you are virtuous.**

## **CHAPTER 48: A FINAL WORD FROM THE BUDDHA**

**As soon as the Buddha finished speaking this Sutra, innumerable devas, humans and sentient beings became free of the six kinds of dust and opened their Dharma-Eye. Moreover, two thousand million sentient beings realized the third fruit of Arhatship on the spot. Sixty eight hundred Bhiksus also became free from all outflows and achieved liberation. In addition, four thousand million Bodhisattvas now dwell in the state of Non-abiding cessation. The august merits of the Dharma were fully visible. What's more, twenty five hundred million sentient beings achieved the state of Irreversible Fortitude. Countless beings attained Unsurpassed Bodhi.**

**Furthermore, The multitudes of beings who had never before desired liberation all awakened the aspiration for Unsurpassed Bodhi. They all vowed to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Once they do so, they will all be referred to as the Tathagatas of Wonderful Sound. Anyone who wishes to cultivate this Dharma-door, whether now or during future generations, will be able to see Amitabha and be reborn in Pureland. His vows are always valid and will stand for all time.**

**At that time, the great trichilocosm gently shook in the six auspicious ways. Various divine transformations manifested. A immense light soon enveloped the ten quarters. Devas could be seen gracefully performing wonderful celestial music while gliding among the stars. The Brahma devas of the Rupaloka also celebrated after hearing the Buddha's sermon. Bouquets of divine flowers soon rained down from the skies like confetti. The Venerable Ananda, Bodhisattva Maitreya, attending Bodhisattvas, celestial dragons and everyone else all rejoiced in what they just heard and proceeded to cultivate in accordance with it.**

**THE BURNING PAINS OF THE FIVE EVILS ILLUSTRATED**  
**(EXCERPTS FROM THE JADE RECORD)**

The following series of illustrations are a selection of excerpts from the most recent edition of the Jade Record. They were drawn by Jiang Yi Zi (江逸子) through psychography. The deity that guided his hand when he drew these pictures is actually the demigod Magistrate Cheng Huang. He holds the rank of Praetor in the administration of the Four Heavenly Kings and his duty is to promote the laws of karma. Thus, these pictures provide us with an accurate idea of the burning pains in the evil paths that awaits those who commit karmic offenses.



**Amita Buddha with his retinue of Sages welcoming a successful aspirant into Pureland. This is the august sight that welcomes virtuous cultivators such as Ven. Hai Xian when their last moment arrives.**

**According to the Ven. Master Chin Kung, people who neglect to contemplate the pains of death and rebirth will squander their last moment, and fail to be mindful of the Buddha at that critical juncture.**



## KING YAMA'S JUDGMENT



Those who neglected to seek rebirth in Pureland and instead committed evils are brought before King Yama. There are numerous lesser courts and countless punishments due to the wide variety of specific offenses.

However, there is a 49-day grace period before rebirth in the evil paths is finalized and punishments are inflicted. If the relatives of the deceased can diligently amass good deeds on behalf of the departed within that time frame, the deceased can have their karmic situation rectified. They will be freed from their original fate and achieve rebirth as aristocrats or devas on account of the merits created on their behalf.

## THE WORKINGS OF KARMA

Punishments in the evil paths are neither ordered by King Yama nor devised by the Jade Emperor. They are purely the result of a offender's own karma. King Yama and Praetor Cheng Huang are merely messengers who try to teach the laws of karma to the obstinate, arrogant and evil beings who fall into such states of woe. For instance, according to the Shurangama Sutra:

*"Ananda, it all comes from the karmic responses which living beings themselves invoke. They create ten habitual causes and undergo six interacting retributions. What are the ten causes? Ananda, the first consists the habit of lustful intercourse which gives rise to mutual rubbing. When this rubbing continues without cease, it activates a tremendous raging fire, just as warmth arises between a person's hands when he rubs them together. Because these two habits set each other ablaze, there come into being the Iron Bed, the Copper Pillar, and other such experiences. Therefore the Tathagatas of the ten directions look upon the act of lust and name it the 'fire of desire.' Bodhisattvas avoid desire as they would a fiery pit."*

Thus, those who indulge in lust and adultery create pertinent seeds of karma that are stored in their consciousness. When they die, these seeds manifest from their Alaya-consciousness and spontaneously arrange the five skandhas and four elements into a realm and state of suffering. The same goes for all the other types of offenses.

For example, there once was a person of high meditative ability and virtue who appealed to Praetor Cheng Huang to abolish the punishments found in the hells on the grounds that they were inhumane. However, the Praetor simply guided the cultivator to the place where punishments were inflicted and told him to see for himself. The virtuous cultivator looked around but saw nothing at all. Hence, he realized afterwards that the punishments of the evil paths were not created by anyone but instead caused by the evil habits and delusions of the offenders themselves.

## RETRIBUTIONS FOR LUSTFUL MISCONDUCT



Those who have indulged in lust, promiscuity, adultery and depravity will be forced to hug a flaming copper pillar as one of their punishments after their lives draw to a close.

Lust is considered the foremost offense by Sages since it gives rise to countless ills and faults. For instance—lying, violence, crimes of passion, divorce, disintegration of marriages, broken families, social decay, jealousy, venereal diseases, abortions, disrepute, decadence, feuds, legal penalties, poverty and even wars often result from lust and love.

Furthermore, according to an edition of Master Yin Guang's Treatise on Response and Retribution, those who create and publish pornography and erotic literature will fall into the Relentless Hell and suffer there for eons without end.

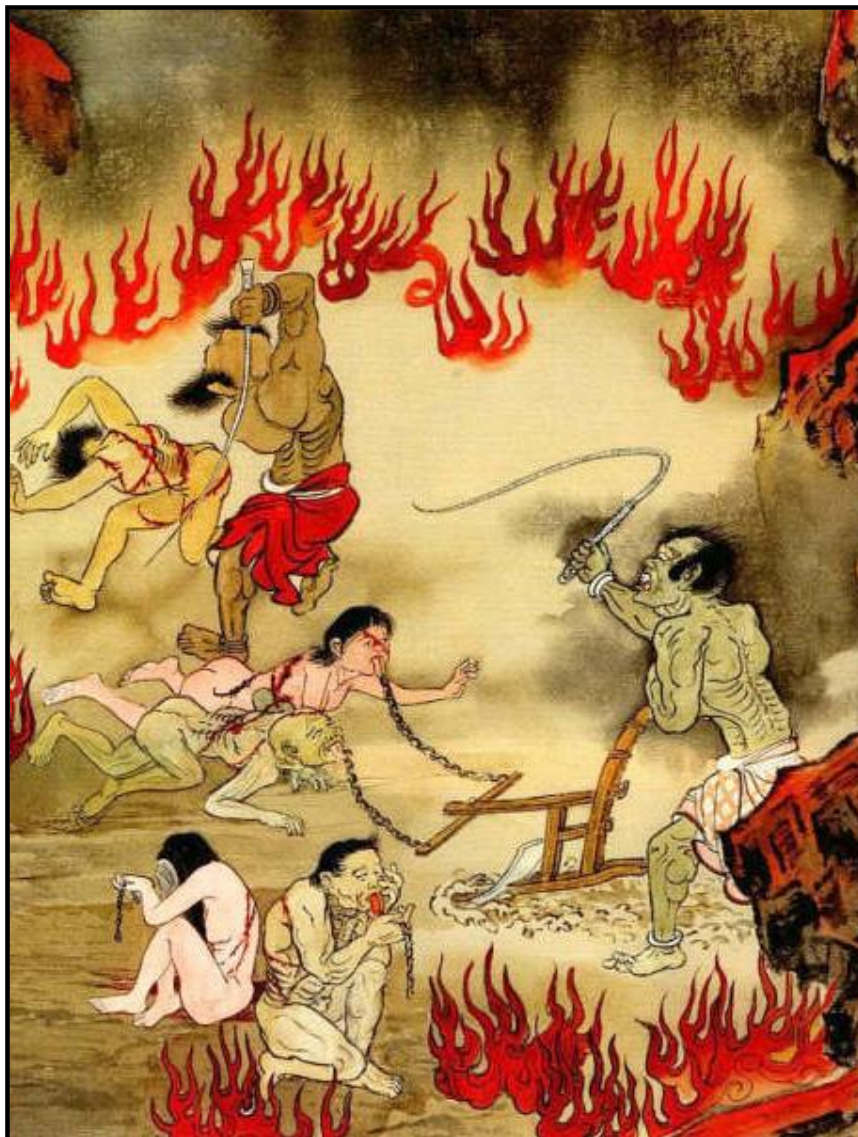


## RETRIBUTIONS FOR KILLING ANIMALS



**Those who had bred, slaughtered, skinned and butchered animals for meat and leather will meet a similar fate after their passing.**

## RETRIBUTIONS FOR CAPRICIOUS SPEECH

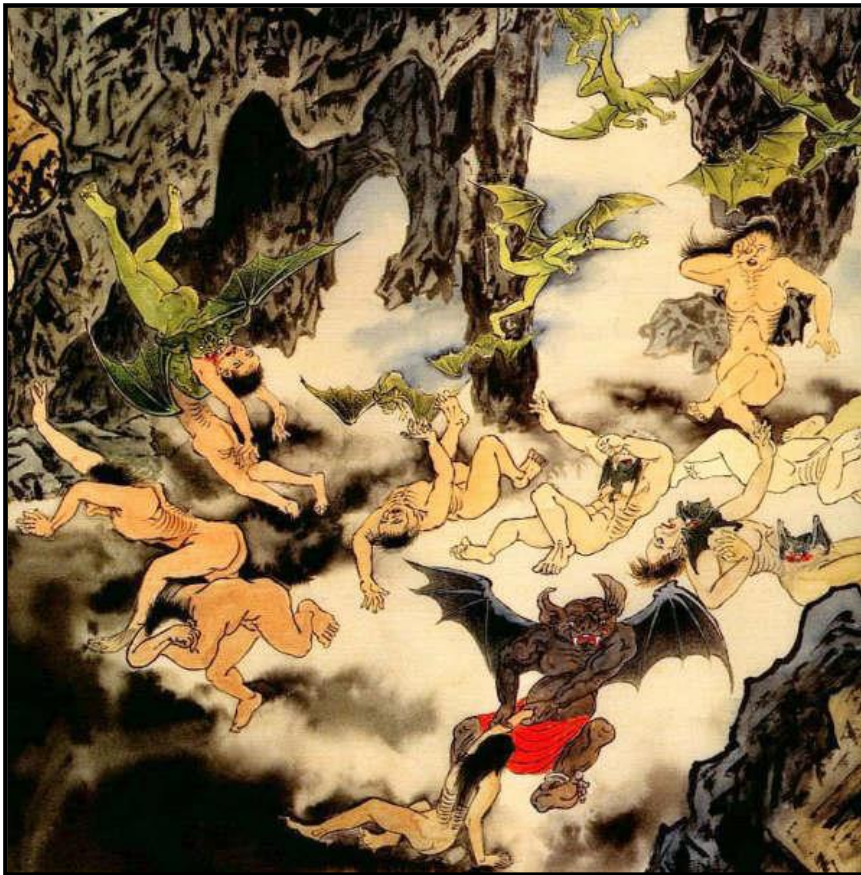


**People who are fond of verbal abuse, lies, divisive speech, cajolery, slander, libel, incitement, ridicule, gossip and the like will have their tongues pulled out as one of their punishments.**

**Furthermore, orators, statesmen, professionals and intellectuals who use their status and skills to spread deviant ideas, ruin the innocent or engage in demagoguery will also be punished in this manner.**



## RETRIBUTIONS FOR AVARICE

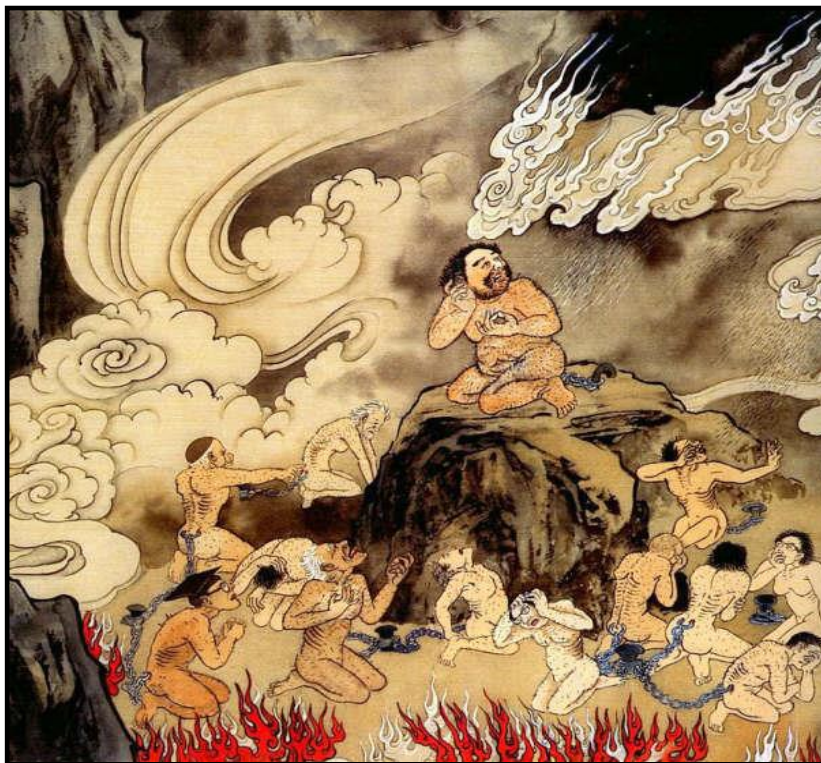


**Those who have engaged in usury, fraud, corruption, embezzlement and extortion will be punished by being repeatedly sucked dry by vampires and harpies.**

**Furthermore, officials, judges and rulers who confiscate, fine, expropriate, impose taxes and or employ policies such as penal labor, asset freezing, eminent domain, forfeiture and the like will also be punished in this manner after their passing.**

**Moreover, men of wealth who are greedy and inhumane will likewise be punished in such ways if they do not become kind and charitable before their deaths.**

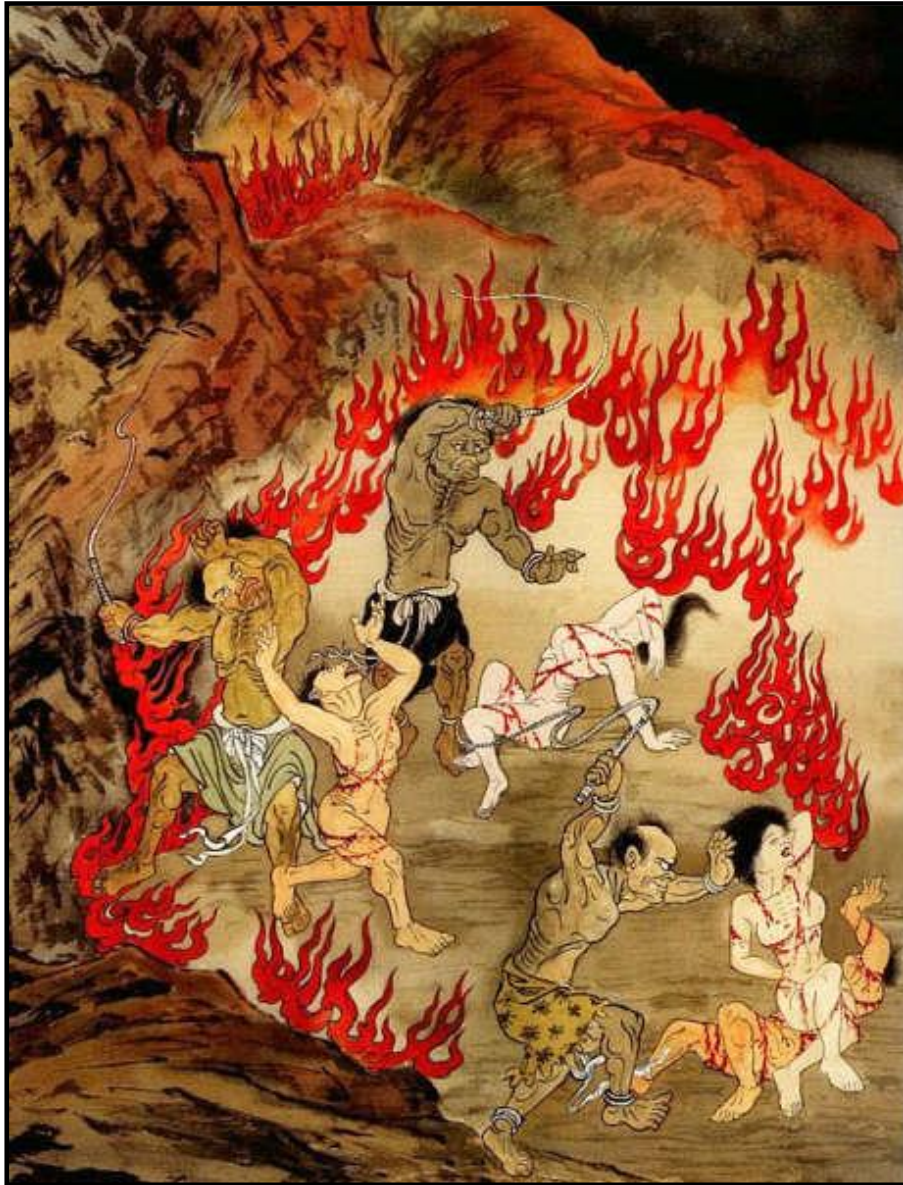
## RETRIBUTIONS FOR ABORTION



**People who abort unborn babies will be mauled and devoured by fierce tigers.  
Those who justify and incite abortions will be punished by raining needles.**



## RETRIBUTIONS FOR DISCRIMINATION AND TYRANNY



People who have abused their authority or strength will be lashed by barbed wire whips amid flames once their lives end. A Sage once said: " Even though ants are weak and small, their lives are cherished by Heaven." Hence, offenses such as racism, inequality, stigmatization, xenophobia, child abuse, animal abuse, bullying, tyranny, oppression, cruel and inhumane punishment, military action and the like will lead to the aforementioned punishment.



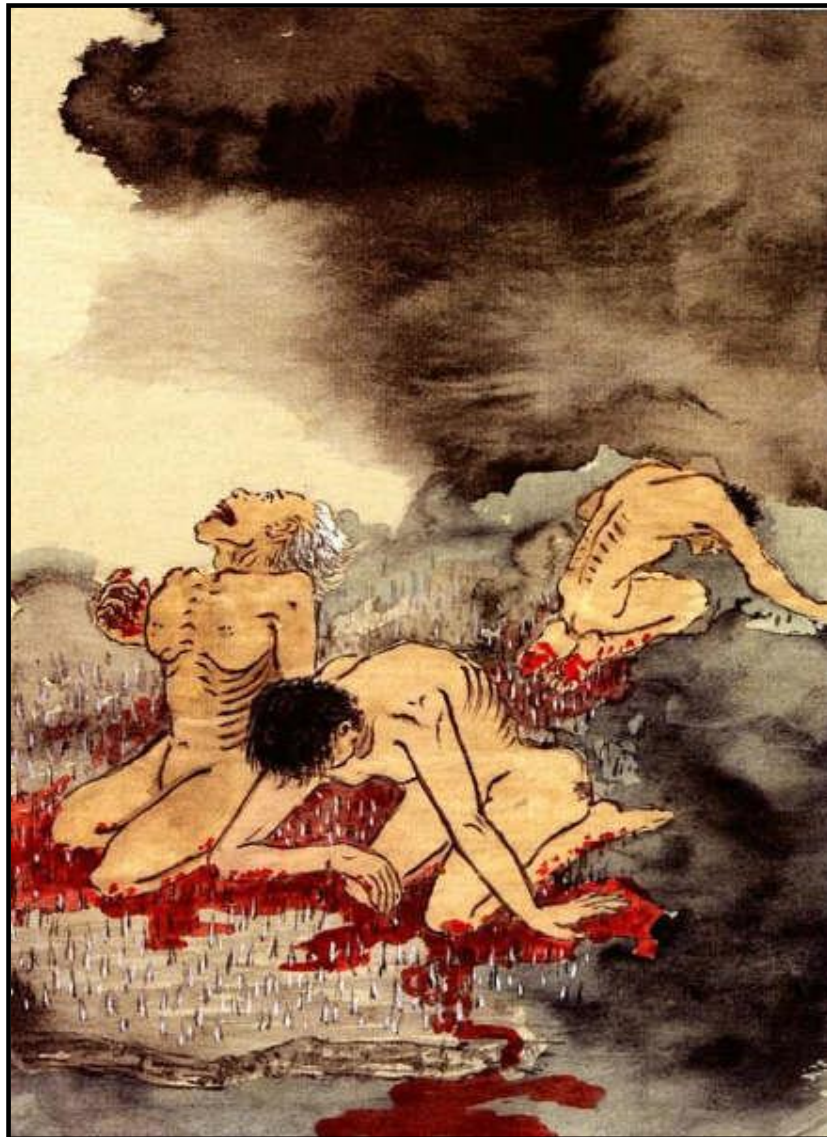
## RETRIBUTIONS FOR MISERLINESS



Those who refused to give alms or be charitable within their power will be reborn in scorching deserts as emaciated ghouls. Their hideous bloated stomachs have insatiable appetites but their barren abode offers nothing for them to eat. If they happen to chance upon something edible—as soon as they try to eat it—a plume of fire will shoot out from their throats and reduce the food to crisp. Thus, they can never ease their thirst and hunger.

The Bodhisattva seen giving food to the ghouls is Guanyin Mahabodhisattva. Because special mantras are chanted, the ghouls are able to eat the food given by the Mahabodhisattva. However, each of us can also help ease the suffering of these hell beings and emaciated ghouls by dedicating the merits from our good deeds to them.

## RETRIBUTIONS FOR IMMORAL MEDICAL PRACTICES



**Doctors and medical professionals who violate the Hippocratic Oath or are inhumane, deceitful and immoral will suffer the above punishment after their deaths. According to Buddhist teachings, doctors who are not interested in profit and tirelessly donate their skills will have limitless merits.**

Furthermore, the teachings of the Sages require that doctors not charge fees for their work. They must never discriminate against those who are poor, weak or stigmatized. The compensation that they receive should be strictly limited to voluntary gifts from the patients and their families. Moreover, the same principle applies to teachers. For instance, Confucius and Mencius never asked for pomp, power or aristocratic titles—they simply taught those who sought their wisdom and lived off whatever was offered to them.



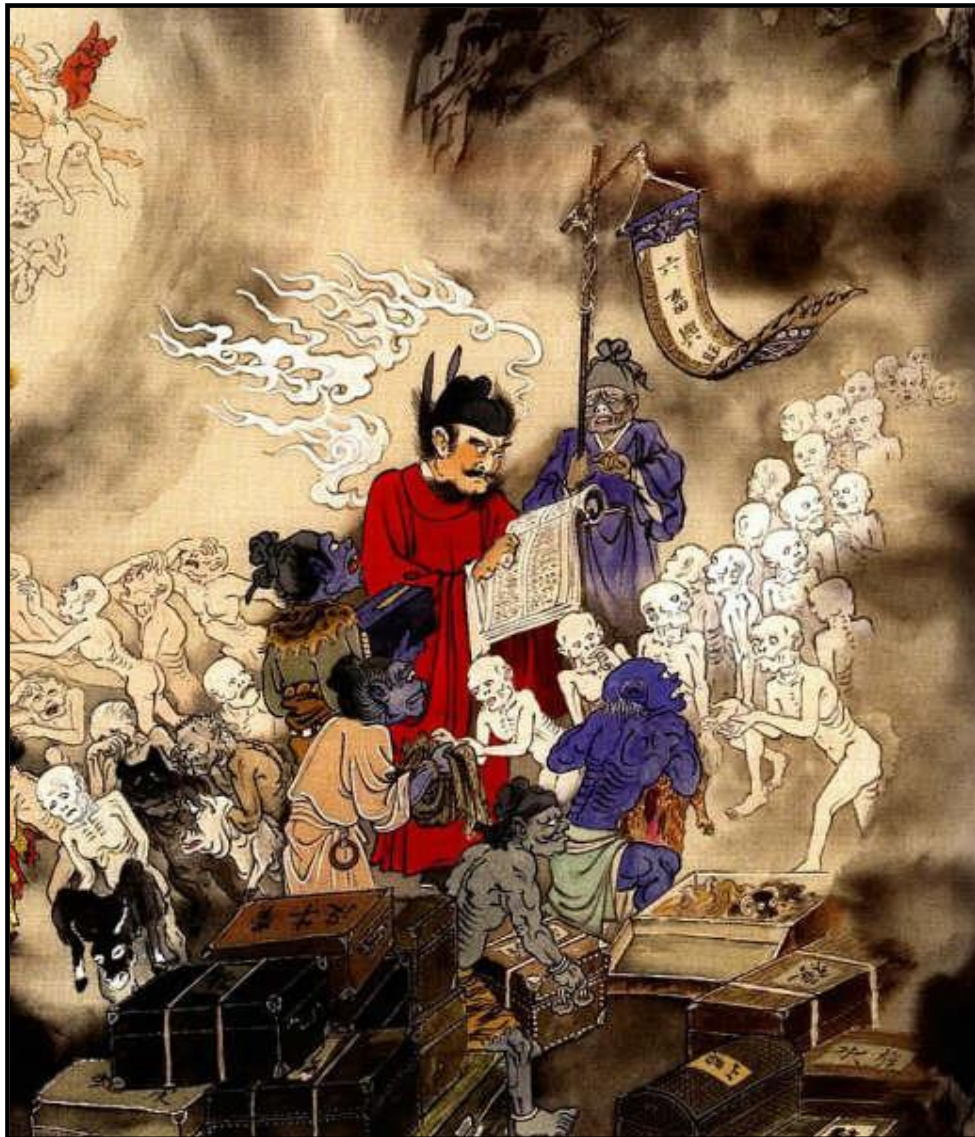
## RETRIBUTIONS FOR DESIGNING AND SELLING WEAPONRY



**This gruesome scene illustrates the suffering that befalls upon those who have designed, produced and sold arms and weaponry during their lives.**

**Wars are in direct opposition to the principles of benevolence that the Buddha and other Sages such as Lao Tzu, Confucius and Mencius have taught. Hence, those who create the tools that make armed conflict possible will bear heavy punishments once their lives end. Nations and statesmen often rally around military action and praise those who help with the war effort. However, the laws of karma does not subscribe to such obstinate hypocrisy and will mete out retributions to all those who kill and help others to kill.**

## RESIDUAL RETRIBUTIONS



Once those who have been punished in the hells and evil paths have exhausted their stocks of evil karma, they become eligible for rebirth in a higher plane of existence. However, human rebirth is often unobtainable since evil habits still taint them. Hence, they are punished by their residual evil karma to be reborn successively as animals.

For instance, in a eye-witness account originating from the Qing Dynasty, a butcher once discovered that the liver of a pig he had just slaughtered had the words "Cao Cao" burnt onto it. Cao Cao was one of the main warlords of the Three Kingdoms era. Thus, all his former power and Machiavellian deviousness was of no avail to him after his sins forced him to assume the body of a pig.

## CONCLUSION- HOW TO REFORM

**A man who has long committed evil but repents and thereafter does all good and refrains from all evil will be bestowed with great fortune after a while.**

### **-Treatise on Response and Retribution**

Having seen the horrific nature and severity of the retributions for evil, we should diligently discard our vices and amass good deeds. As the above quote states that virtue and good deeds can neutralize past evils—we should never again kill, steal, lie, indulge in excess, or fail to be filial towards our parents and elders. Furthermore, we should regularly give what we can to charity and protect animal life by purchasing and liberating captive animals slated for slaughter. What's more, we should print Buddhist texts and produce images of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas for free distribution. The merits from turning the great Dharma Wheel—printing Buddhist texts and making Buddha images— are particularly exalted. The following is Patriarch Yin Guang's summarization of the main rewards for turning the great Dharma Wheel:

- 1.) Any pending karmic retributions will be eradicated, the most heavy ones will be reduced greatly.
- 2.) You will gain the protection of auspicious devas, gods and deities. Furthermore, you will avoid wars, disasters, bandits, thefts, diseases, floods and fires. Also, you will never be imprisoned or arrested.
- 3.) You will be released from the cycle of hatred and revenge as your past karmic enemies will share your merits and become devas or Sages.
- 4.) Vicious beasts, evil ghosts and demons cannot harm you.
- 5.) Your anxieties will fade away. No misfortune will befall upon you during the day and your dreams at night will always be sweet. Your strength will be full and your complexion will be radiant and healthy. Anything you do will be successful.
- 6.) As you are sincere and devoted to the Dharma, you will naturally have good fortune, long life, a harmonious family and abundant stocks of all the necessities of life.



7.) Yours words and actions will please the gods. Moreover, you will be welcomed and respected in all the places you go to.

8.) You wisdom, happiness and health will increase everyday. If you are a woman, you will be reborn as an eminent man.

9.) You will be forever free from rebirth in the hells and evil paths. You will always be reborn as a deva or member of the aristocracy. Furthermore, you will be wise, handsome and fortunate.

10.) You will help convert sentient beings towards the Way. Moreover, you will be perpetually close to the Buddha and Dharma until you attain liberation.

Furthermore, if we look back to Amita Buddha's 48 Vows, we can see that taking refuge in Amita Buddha is the only way to truly and permanently free ourselves of the threat of the evil paths:

#### **Sutra Vows 21: The Vow of Forgiveness**

**"When I attain Unsurpassed Bodhi, there would not be one virtuous and willing sentient being who could not easily attain rebirth in my land. However, if sentient beings who have long committed evil repent after hearing my name, and thereafter adheres to the Buddhadharma while yearning for rebirth in my land, then such beings will be saved from the evil paths and rise to my land upon their deaths. Until this vow is fulfilled, may I never attain Unsurpassed Bodhi."**

Thus, we must have faith that Pureland rebirth is open to all who are willing. Even those who are in the hells can manifest in Pureland within a space of a thought by taking refuge in Amita Buddha. Once in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, they will never retrogress and will dwell in the bliss of Bodhisattvahood. The evil paths will have forever collapsed behind them.

For instance, Venerable Yin Ke was a Song dynasty monk who had flagrantly broken several important precepts. One day, he read the Earth Store Sutra (which contains detailed descriptions of all the hells) and realized that his heavy sins will force him into the Relentless Hell (the worst of all the hells). Fearing this, he searched for a way to escape this retribution and later came upon the Infinite Life Sutra. He then retreated back to his room and diligently recited Amita Buddha's name unceasingly for 3 full days. At the end of that period, Amita Buddha appeared before him and he was saved!

## THE SUPREME BENEFITS OF VEGANISM

Unbeknownst to many in this world, the killing of animals for food and leather causes severe karmic retributions not only in the evil paths (as we have seen), but also in this world as well. For instance, the Buddha has said that wars, violence, illnesses, injuries and early deaths are all caused by the evil karmic seeds created from hunting, fishing, butchering and meat packing.

Hence, the violence, wars and diseases that are ever present in our time are mostly caused by our desires to eat meat. As mentioned in the Foreword, there are only a few billion humans in this world but hundreds of billions of animals are slaughtered every year. No wonder the Buddha said that those who cultivate virtue in this world for ten days can reap the same amount of merits that would take those in other worlds a whole millennium to amass.

Furthermore, eating meat has another even more horrifying consequence which the following abridged excerpt from Ven. Master Hsuan Hua's commentary on the Shurangama Sutra clearly illustrates:

*"During the reign of the Emperor Wu of Liang, the Buddhadharma flourished. At that time there was a wealthy man who was celebrating the marriage of his son. He invited Ch'an Master Chih Kung to recite Sutras and give the blessing. When Ch'an Master Chih Kung arrived and looked around, he said:*

***How strange! How bizarre!.....***

***The daughter eats the mother's flesh.***

***The drum the son beats is stretched with the father's skin.***

***Pigs and sheep are on the seat.***

***The six close kin cook in the brazier.***

***People gather to celebrate.***

***I see all this as a form of suffering.***

*How did Ch'an Master Chih Kung know this? Because he had the ability to know others' thoughts and the ability to perceive past lives - he had the Buddha Eye. When he looked in front of the house he said, "The daughter eats the mother's flesh," because he saw a little girl chewing on a chunk of pork. Her mother had died and been reborn as a pig. The pig had been slaughtered and cooked, and she was actually eating the flesh of her own mother! When he inspected the musicians in the band by*

*the entrance way, he said, "The drum the son beats is stretched with the father's skin." The drummer was hitting a drum stretched with deer-hide. His father had died and been reborn as a deer. The deer had been slaughtered and its hide tanned and the drummer was actually beating his own father!*

*Then Ch'an Master Chih Kung noticed that "Pigs and sheep are on the seat." He saw pigs and sheep sitting like guests on the k'ang - the high brick beds in the house. They were people now, but in their former lives they had been pigs and sheep. In their former lives they themselves had been eaten, so now they were reborn as people who in turn ate pigs and sheep to even up the debt. When the Ch'an Master took a look at the cooking pots' he exclaimed, "Six close kin cook in the brazier." The six kinds of close kin refer to relatives on the father's side and the mother's side, kin of the brother and sisters, and so forth. They had been close relatives of these people but now had been reborn as pigs and sheep, had been slaughtered, and were being cooked in the brazier. Ch'an Master Chih Kung summarized, "People gather to celebrate." Everyone who came was saying, "Congratulations!" and "Best Wishes!" But the Master notes, "I see all this as a form of suffering." What I see is actually suffering."*

Master Hsuan Hua makes it clear that people are reborn together as family members due to interconnected karmic affinities, debts and credits that have accrued since time immemorial. Thus, it is very likely for deceased parents to be reborn as livestock that will be eaten by their still living children. So imagine that! How many people have unwittingly killed and eaten their loved ones while grieving over their losses?

Furthermore, the Buddha has said that those who refrain from taking animal life will be long lived, healthy, safe and fortunate due to the positive karma created. The two accounts below are clear verifications of the Buddha's words. These true historical accounts are from another edition of the Jade Record that was written by a Chinese cultivator who met a Buddhist deity during meditation.

### **The Merciful Scholar:**

**During the Song dynasty, there was a young scholar who had tried and failed several times to pass the imperial examinations. Four years after his first failed attempt, he again travelled to the imperial capital to take part in the latest round of examinations.**

**He lodged himself in an inn and proceeded to study through the night in**



preparation for the upcoming exam. However, he soon became fatigued and dozed off. As he was about to slip into deep sleep—a vision of a distressed and bloodied white rabbit suddenly appeared. The rabbit pleaded with him to free it along with several other small animals held in the inn cellar.

The scholar immediately awakened and was initially doubtful at what he had just seen. Nevertheless, curiosity prompted him to silently sneak into the cellar. Surprisingly—there was indeed several animals locked in a cage. What he saw reflected his vision perfectly.

He soon realized that these trapped pheasants and small game were to be later served as main courses. Feeling ashamed over the fact that he too ate game, he hastily helped the animals to flee by opening the cage and cellar window. However, the injured white rabbit that had appealed to him for help remained traumatized and huddled in the corner. Thus, the scholar silently packed his bags in the middle of the night and personally carried the rabbit with him on his way out.

Eventually, the scholar stopped to rest under an arbor. Suddenly—out of the blue—a celestial devi appeared before him. She was fair beyond imagination and possessed a radiant golden complexion. As soon as she stretched her elegant hands towards the scholar, the rabbit quickly jumped into her arms. The devi then revealed that the rabbit he saved belonged to her. It had been violently captured while patrolling the mortal world. As the rabbit reassumed its celestial form, the injuries it had sustained miraculously disappeared. She explained that even though he was not a man of high wisdom, his kind and merciful heart had generated enough merits to gain high office. She reminded him to be kind towards the citizenry and to diligently protect living beings for the rest of his life. Having said that, the devi instantly disappeared. The young scholar was left in awe at the magnificent sight he had just witnessed.

The scholar proceeded to lodge himself at another inn and took the imperial exams the next day. Even though he did not achieve the prestigious academic honors he had sought after, he was still awarded a magistracy. Furthermore, he was quickly and continuously promoted by his superiors. Reflecting on this, he finally understood the power of good deeds and henceforth liberated life everyday. In addition to buying captive animals slated for slaughter and setting them free, he also became vegan and promoted veganism.

Years soon passed and the young scholar was now 54 years old. Furthermore, he had also reached the exalted post of Chancellor of State. Despite his unceasing efforts to liberate life and the fact that he had convinced many to become stop eating meat, he still felt that his impact was limited. The courtiers, aristocrats and members of the imperial family all scoffed at his scruples and continued to feast sumptuously on various meats such as lamb, bear paws and beef. They did not feel even a hair's breadth worth of shame at their cruelty and excess.

The scholar felt sorrow over the never ending slaughter and thus tendered his retirement. After returning to his hometown, he spent his remaining years using his substantial pension to adopt stray dogs and suffering animals.

When he turned 76, he saw the white rabbit that he had saved perched gracefully on his window sill. The scholar (who was on his deathbed) understood that his lifespan was up. Regretting that he could not turn the tide against meat eating, he expressed his apologies. However, the white rabbit quickly led him to his front gate where to his amazement, all the souls of the countless animals he had saved over the years were crowded around his residence. The rabbit then said: "As your stock of merits is full to the point of overflowing, the Heavenly Lord Lao Tzu wishes to bestow upon you a place among the gods. Otherwise, you could have your lifespan extended by 30 years. Your choice." The scholar replied that 30 years was too short and expressed his wish to rise to the side of the Heavenly Lord and assist him in doing good. Hence, he closed his eyes and ascended towards his celestial villa in the company of the white rabbit he had saved so many years before.

#### **Guanyin Bodhisattva's Visit to a Butcher:**

In 1908, there lived in Shanxi province a butcher named Chang. His parents (who were also butchers) had already passed away and the only family he had left was his sickly younger sister. Everyday, he slaughtered a pig and sold the meat for a living.

When Chang was young, he had detested the cruelty involved in slaughtering pigs. However, as he was the only heir to the family butchery, his parents forced him to learn the trade. By the time he was 25, he was already known in his village as the guillotine that all pigs fear. In fact, the total number of pigs he had

slaughtered was so numerous that if all the skulls of the pigs he had killed were lined up in a straight line, it would span several miles.

One day, a old woman visited the village and approached Chang's butchery. She said to him, " I will show you the way to a future fortune if you could give me two porkers free of charge." Chang thought that the old woman was mentally ill and thus ignored her. However, the old woman responded to this snub by recounting in detail his life, history and family situation. She also warned him that this was his last chance to extricate himself from his evil karma.

Startled by the fact that this stranger knew everything about him, Chang immediately suspected that she was a deity and proceeded to comply with her request for two porkers. She left right after taking possession of the two porkers, leaving Chang somewhat bewildered. Nevertheless, he was happy to have not offended a potential deity. However, before she disappeared from sight, she turned back towards Chang and shouted —"I'll be back tomorrow!"

The next day, she came back to Chang's butchery and requested that he give her four pigs. Chang immediately became irate and accused her of being a greedy fraud. However, she paid no heed to his anger and simply repeated her request for four pigs. Chang then demanded to know what happened to the two porkers he gave her the day before. She replied that she had released them.

Incensed, Chang immediately launched into a angry tirade. However, the old woman remained completely calm and simply asked, "Do you understand why I asked for those two porkers?"

Chang ignored the question and continued his tirade. Suddenly, the old lady ascended into the air and transformed into Guanyin Bodhisattva—faced with such a majestic and august sight—Chang promptly fell to his knees in reverence despite not being a Buddhist.

The Bodhisattva did not wait for Chang to compose himself but immediately showed him a vision which explained that the two porkers were actually his parents. They had been reborn as pigs to atone for their sins. Hence, he was just a few moments away from committing patricide and matricide had the Bodhisattva not intervened. Feeling immense shock and guilt, Chang begged the Bodhisattva to show him the way forward.

**The Bodhisattva said, " Your lifespan has been reduced considerably because of your offenses. Thus, if you wish to save yourself , you must henceforth cease all acts of killing. Furthermore, you must protect the pigs currently in your pigsty until their natural deaths. Afterwards, you must liberate 10,000,000 pigs in order to fully rectify your karmic situation. The first pig to die in your pigsty will show you the way."**

**As soon as these words were spoken, the Bodhisattva vanished into thin air. It was not difficult for Chang to keep the pigs currently in his pigsty, but he was doubtful that he could ever liberate 10,000,000 pigs. Nevertheless, he thought of the Bodhisattva's assurances and diligently proceeded to do as instructed. From that moment on, he treated his pigs like family. Eventually, word spread that he had renounced his career as a butcher. However, he never told anyone about his encounter with Guanyin Bodhisattva. Instead, he simply exhorted people to liberate life and refrain from slaughtering animals.**

**After a few years had passed, one of the pigs fell ill and was on the verge of death. As he was comforting the dying pig, it suddenly started to repeatedly oink towards a spot on the ground. A curious Chang immediately started to dig and to his surprise—crude oil began to seep out! A short while later, surveyors concluded that his pigsty was located above a oil reserve. He promptly sold his property and mineral rights for tens of thousands of silver dragons. He used this capital to start a business that soon generated for him a fortune. Everyday, he sent men into the market to purchase live pigs, thereafter depositing these pigs into Buddhist animal sanctuaries. After doing so for 50 years, he finally managed to save 10,000,000 pigs.**

**Chang lived to the ripe old age of 78. When he died, he left behind a wealthy family. Also, due to the karma created by his good deeds, he was able to avoid the wars of that period—safely retreating to Taiwan after the Communist takeover.**

### **Commentary:**

By simply saving the lives of several small animals, the scholar was able to amass enough merit to gain a lifetime of high offices. Furthermore, his remuneration and pension likely amounted to a fortune of tens of thousands of silver taels. In comparison, a small family could live for a year on just a few taels of silver during that time. He did not originally have such good fortune pending, but that one act of

opening the cage yielded this reward.

Moreover, due to his further efforts to promote veganism and liberate life, he was able to ascend to a blissful heavenly rebirth at the time of death. However, he was also offered a lifespan extension of thirty years. This is because those who liberate life will naturally obtain a long lifespan.

The same goes for the butcher. By simply renouncing his butcher's knife and protecting his remaining sounder of pigs for a few years, he managed to create such a large stock of good fortune that oil manifested below his land. Furthermore, his further efforts to liberate life gave him unparalleled prosperity and health. In fact, his originally meager lifespan was extended by over half a century! All this does not include the additional benefit of having the entirety of his prior evil karma eradicated. Thus, Chang went from a man on the verge of rebirth in the hells to a long lived and wealthy merchant.

Furthermore, in a set of short ancient historical accounts verified by Master Yin Guang, two of them reveal the supreme merits that result from not eating beef. While the killing of any animal for its meat is an offense, the gravest is the killing of cows.

According to the first of the two accounts: A member of a travelling theater troupe once met the wandering ghost of his deceased neighbor (who had died abroad). The ghost asked for permission to share the ferry he had hired, so that he (the ghost) may return home to take up abode in his ancestral shrine. The actor agreed. Eventually, the actor asked the ghost, "What does King Yama consider to be the gravest karmic offense?" The ghost replied, "Eating beef is the most serious sin—those who eat beef are devoid of fortune and bereft of divine protection—on the other hand, those who abstain from it will be blessed by the gods and accrue excellent stocks of merit!" Hearing this, the actor immediately vowed that he would never eat beef again. However, the ghost immediately burst into tears and exclaimed: "I can no longer return home! The auspicious spirits of good karma who now protect you will not allow a sinful being like me to accompany you." Dejected, the ghost climbed overboard and wandered away. Overawed by this revelation, the actor quickly rushed back to his village and convinced everyone to refrain from eating beef.

Unfortunately in this account, the actor did not know that he could dedicate his merits to the ghost. If he had done so, the ghost would have been immediately transformed into a radiant deva possessing a celestial palace (see the *Petavatthu* for more info).

Likewise, according to the second account: A minor local official of Suzhou province once circulated letters that encouraged people to abstain from beef. He did so after the spirit of a deceased colleague appealed to him to make merits on his behalf. As a result of this deed, the deceased colleague became a deva and the local official's lifespan was extended by six twelve year periods! Furthermore, his stocks of merit were filled to the brim.

In the Treatise on Response and Retribution, it is stated that grave sins result in one's lifespan being shortened by a period of twelve years and vice versa. Thus, the local official increased his lifespan by a whopping seventy two years by simply encouraging the local community to refrain from eating beef. This increase in lifespan was also accompanied by wealth, happiness, offices and future heavenly rebirth.

Therefore, how much more would be our reward if we abstain from all types of meat and diligently promote veganism?

It should be very clear by now that hunting, fishing, meat eating or engaging in the meat packing business will lead to heavy karmic debts. Thus, If we wish to be long lived and happy—and if we want to avoid atrocities and hellish karmic retributions—then we should diligently liberate life and encourage others to do the same. Furthermore, we should eat a meat free diet and abstain from hunting, fishing or working in the meat packing industry. If we sell food and provide catering services for a living, we should not sell meat products or dishes containing meats. The good karma generated from such abstinence will ensure happiness in this life and heavenly bliss in the next. If we dedicate these merits towards Buddahood in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, we will surely realize our aspiration!

**Recommended Charity: Tainan Avalokitesvara Homeland Buddhist Association**

**Website:** <http://www.avalokitesvara.tw/Donation.php>  
**Sanctuary gallery:** [http://www.avalokitesvara.tw/Pet1\\_pic.php](http://www.avalokitesvara.tw/Pet1_pic.php)  
**Email:** [a0981552011@gmail.com](mailto:a0981552011@gmail.com)  
**Facebook:** <https://zh-tw.facebook.com/avalokitesvara2013>

This charity is registered with the government of Taiwan. Their mission is to save cattle, pigs, rabbits, poultry, goats, fish and the like from slaughter by purchasing them and moving them to their sprawling animal sanctuary in Tainan county.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY & FILIAL PIETY

# 孝順

The Buddha often stresses the importance of being filial towards our parents and elders. For harmonious families are the building blocks of a stable society where Sages can arise. The reason that Mahayana Buddhism has flourished so well in China is due to the steep tradition of filial piety and the moral teachings Confucius, Lao Tzu and Mencius. According to the Venerable Master Chin Kung, one's parents are equal in precedence to the Buddha. Thus, it is no surprise that patricide and matricide are among the five grave offenses that warrant rebirth in the Relentless Hell. In fact, the teachings of these Sages are basically a detailed expansion of the Buddha's Sigalovada Sutta.

However, filial piety is not exclusive to the Asian cultures. It is actually a integral part of the basic goodness of the Buddha-nature (which everyone has). Hence, everyone can emulate the virtues and social values promoted by Mencius and Confucius.

During most of Chinese history, the average family unit usually numbered around two hundred members while smaller families still had around eighty members. It was not uncommon for five generations to reside under one roof. Everyone supported each other and worked towards the common good. The elders administered the family moral code and preserved the family annals while the most senior family member served as the head of the entire household. Each family lived together in a family complex that also included a school for the children. The residential quarters and lounge of the elderly members were always located next to the school house. This way, the elders received much needed joy and company from the children, and the children benefited from the elders' valuable life experiences.

Furthermore, pensions were not needed in the past since the care of the old or infirm was the responsibility of the household. The security of the traditional family unit gave everyone a purpose in life and the freedom to pursue spiritual, literary, artistic and enterprising endeavors without having to toil just to eat and live.

Nowadays, few have such security. Once a person reaches the age of majority, they are often on their own and must now sweat for a monthly paycheck. They need to take out loans to fund everything from their house to living expenses. Even governments are saddled with massive deficits. Once they grow old, they must spend the rest of their lives in care homes or alone. Furthermore, their life savings are then wasted on medical bills. The Venerable Master Chin Kung often says that: "Nowadays, people indulge in idle pleasures during their youth, fight for a living during their adulthood and suffer alone in their old age". Burdened by anxieties, few are happy in this world. All this is because the world has turned its back to the teachings of the ancient Sages.

However, this was not the case in the past —far from it. Back then, Confucian teachings wisely divided a person's life into four stages under the Four Seasons of Life system:

### **Spring: Natal, Early & Higher Education (Ages 0-20):**

Moral education starts as soon as conception. Unbeknownst to many today, an unborn baby begins to perceive as soon it is conceived. Thus, the conduct, personality and language of the parents are already creating an impression. According to Master Chin Kung, the first three years of a child's life will influence him up to the age of eighty—and by age seven, the cumulative influences he has come into contact with since conception will influence him for life. Thus, the importance of natal moral education cannot be overstated.

Thus, in the past, parents remained celibate after conception and flawlessly treated each other with respect. They regularly recited Buddhist texts and observed the precepts. As teaching by example is stressed by the Sages, they personally displayed in conduct each of the rules outlined in the Confucian moral text *Di Zi Gui* (Standards of Being a Good Pupil and Child). They saw no evil, heard no evil and said no evil.

If only positive influences surround the fetus or embryo, the baby will naturally grow up to become a Sage. Furthermore, there is no need to teach several moral texts as Master Chin Kung has said that single-minded cultivation is the key to success. Hence, if you can master the *Di Zi Gui*, you have effectively mastered all the other sutras as well. In the past, each family had a family moral code based on the *Di Zi Gui* that included commentaries, annotations or accounts added by previous generations.

A strong natal and early moral education will ensure that the child becomes a good



man or woman. In all the Mahayana sutras, it is expressively stated that only good men or women can easily achieve profound insight by practicing them. Thus, this is why liberation is easily attainable in a Confucian society.

**Summer: Junior Responsibility (Ages 20 to 40):**

Once children reached twenty years of age, they begin to contribute to society and the family. If a person wanted to start a business, capital will be provided from the family funds. However, most remained home and helped with the family business. Others may take part in the imperial examinations and become magistrates or civil servants. No matter what they chose to do, no one applied for loans or struggled alone. The family always provided.

Furthermore, by this time, suitable marriage partners would have been selected and vetted by the parents. As everyone back then practiced virtue, divorce never crossed anyone's mind. The men were honorable and the women kind and pliant. Thus, the messy divorces and relationships we see today were unheard of back then.

The most important task during this life stage was the accumulation of merits. With money and power now at their disposal, good deeds such as printing sutras, making Buddha images, releasing life, building bridges, giving food or medicine to the poor and making offerings to monks were diligently done.

If they became magistrates or officials after passing the imperial examinations, they governed in accordance with compassion, etiquette, filial piety and reason. They also used their official capacity to promote sacred moral texts such as the Treatise on Response and Retribution or Mencius' Analects. This is because the foremost duty of government officials back then was to promote virtue and the teachings of the Buddha by personal example. In the eyes of the Sages, society is like a haystack. It will not burn if the farmer keeps it wet. However, if it becomes dry (i.e. devoid of moral guidance), it can be easily set alight by just a spark. Once that spark ignites people's passions, an inferno of chaos, war, impiety, crime, inequality and tyranny will engulf society. No amount of law enforcement will be able to reverse such a situation.

Hence, in order to build and maintain a civilization, a sturdy foundation of morality is required—only the Dharma can save the world.

Furthermore, no matter which station in life they occupied, all of them contributed

back to the family and reverently served their parents and elders.

Such conduct accords fully with the Buddha's teachings and precepts. Hence, their stocks of merit only increased with each passing day. Besides, as they always had their family to count on, they were not burdened with mundane concerns such as job security, mortgages and saving for retirement.

### **Fall: Senior Responsibility (Ages 40 to 60):**

Once they reach this life stage, they take on senior roles in the household and or government. According to the Sages, the greatest act of impiety is to leave no heirs to honor one's ancestors. However, this does not mean that the bloodline must continue at all costs. It simply means that one must turn the Dharma Wheel by passing on the teachings of the family code to a successor. For example, senior officials would take incoming junior magistrates under their wing. Everyone back then—from artisans to chancellors—eagerly mentored and promoted the talented and virtuous. Lastly, they continued to use their wealth and or official resources to do good deeds and support the public welfare.

### **Winter: Sagehood (Ages 60-80):**

The age of sixty is the age of retirement. Those who had worked away from home would close up shop and return home. Officials and magistrates would tender their resignations. During this last stage of life, the primary concern was Pureland rebirth. With a vibrant family community to return to, no one worried about retirement savings or having no one to depend on. Back then, people spent their golden years blissfully enjoying domestic life. Moreover, as they have spent the last sixty years amassing merits and cultivating the Dharma, good fortune, health and happiness naturally shadowed them. Even if they do not obtain Pureland rebirth, they are always reborn as high ranking gods and goddesses.

### **Commentary:**

Mencius once gave the following advice to the King of Liang:

*"Mencius replied, 'They are only men of education, who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they will not have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do, in the way of self-abandonment, of*

*moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license. When they thus have been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them;-- this is to entrap the people. How can such a thing as entrapping the people be done under the rule of a benevolent man?"*

*"Therefore an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people, so as to make sure that, for those above them, they shall have sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and, for those below them, sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly satisfied, and that in bad years they shall escape the danger of perishing. After this he may urge them, and they will proceed to what is good, for in this case the people will follow after it with ease."*

In these two paragraphs, Mencius provides a succinct diagnosis of all that which is wrong with the world today. People today have no purpose and no support. Thus, they squander their years and pursue only survival or their passions. When they die, they find that they have neither virtue nor stocks of merit to rely on. Therefore, it is inevitable that they will have to descend into the realms of suffering.

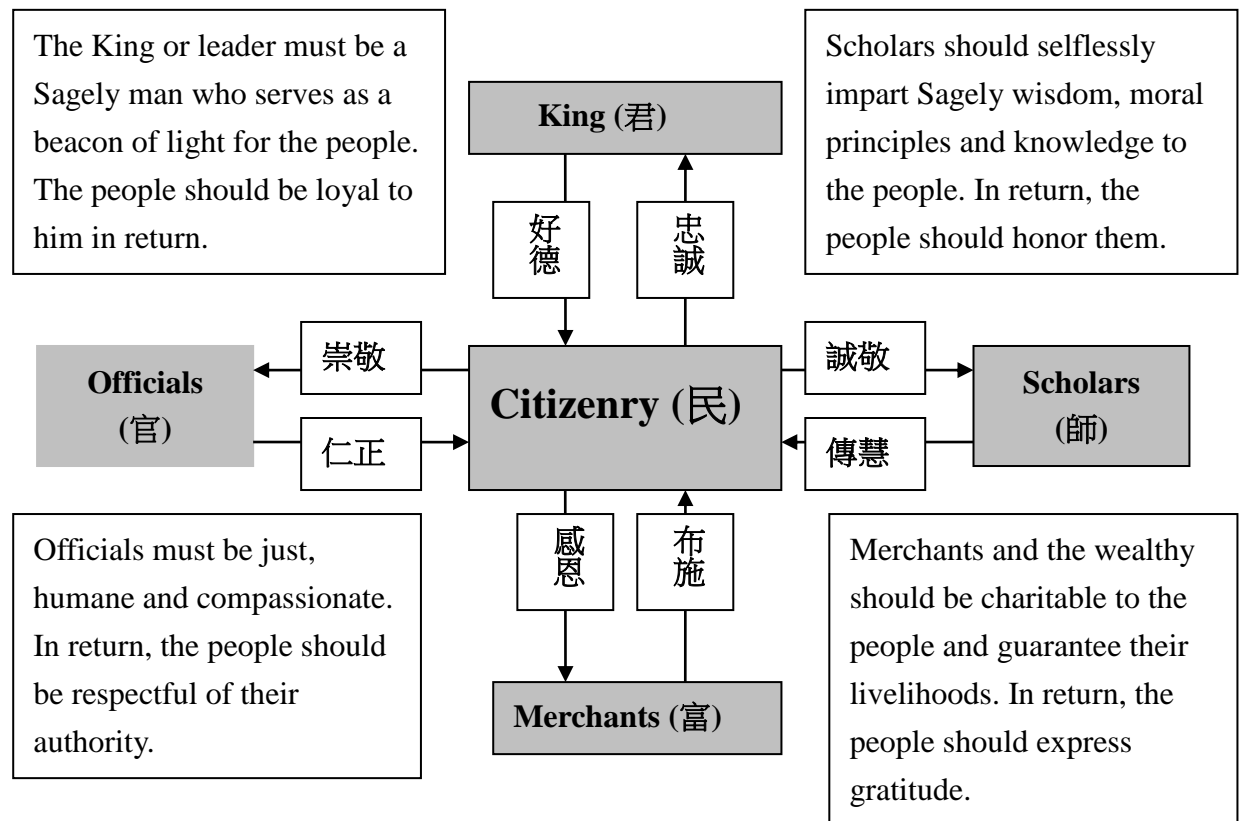
This is why the Buddha stresses that we must be filial and generous to our family members. Furthermore, we must educate our children properly (i.e. natal education) to ensure that they grow up to be good people. There will be neither rebellion nor adolescent misbehavior if everyone followed the parenting principles passed on by the Sages. Hence, the Confucian family model and the Four Seasons of Life system must be introduced into modern society or else the world will not prosper. While this would be very difficult to accomplish as the old traditional family units have since scattered into nuclear families, the truth is that the institution of the traditional Confucian family does not have to be based on blood relations.

For instance, Chinese businessman Hu Xiao Lin (胡小林居士) has managed to turn his business into a modern success story of Confucian ideals. What he did was that he decided to run his business in accordance with the teachings of the Di Zi Gui. He treated his employees like family and built for them a company school, hospital and residences. His employees have not only job security, but also the peace of mind of knowing that their children will be educated properly and be offered positions in the company once they are of age. Unsurprisingly, his business improved considerably after he started adhering to the words of the Sages. The merits created by doing good and spreading the teachings of the Sages are indeed boundless!

Furthermore, as you can see from the chart below, Hu Xiao Lin has also fulfilled his duty as a merchant in the Confucian social structure. If the entire world could be

governed in accordance with these principles of reciprocity and righteousness, we would be living in an utopia.

### Principles of Confucian Governance



Hence, the problem today is that no one follows the above principles. For example, scholars nowadays often impart only their biases, delusions and political views while officials are often unjust, inhumane or opinionated. People cannot follow these principles since they have not been properly educated. They have not been properly educated because Confucian parenting principles and family values are not observed.

Even if we have not the ability to replicate Hu Xiao Lin's success, we must still raise our children in accordance with the methods outlined in the first life stage. Even if our parents have already passed, we should still diligently do various good deeds and dedicate the merits to them ; no matter which realm they have been reborn into, they can still benefit from these merits. If they have not passed, then we should diligently introduce them to Buddhist teachings so they can seek rebirth in Amita Buddha's Pureland. There is no gift greater than Bodhi and helping one's parents to become Buddhas is the highest act of filial piety.

To conclude this section, a translation of an excellent story from the Ershisi Xiao (Twenty Four Exemplars of Filial Piety) is included below:

### **The Example of Wu Meng: Rags to Riches due to Forbearance & Piety**

*In the Jin Dynasty, a filial eight-year-old boy named Wu Meng served his parents with devoted compliance. His family was extremely poor and could not afford mosquito netting. On hot summer nights the mosquitoes would come swarming in as thick as smoke. The little boy would remove his shirt and let the insects land on his bare skin. He would watch them drink their fill of his blood, and fly away; he wouldn't raise a hand to shoo them off, no matter how painfully they stung him. Wu Meng wasn't a fool, so why didn't he brush the bugs away?*

*He knew that his parents had no netting at their bedside. If he drove the mosquitoes away from his body, they would surely fly over and wake up his mother and father with their stinging. So the devoted son simply let the mosquitoes drink his blood instead. So that his parents wouldn't know about his sacrifice and demand that he stop, the boy would wake up earlier than they, slip his shirt over his swollen torso, and return to his own bed. But one morning, being tired from loss of sleep, he forgot to wake up and pull on his shirt. His father arose and found his son asleep by his bed. He looked at the boy's pathetic, mosquito-bitten skin that was covered with red welts, and understood immediately what Wu Meng had done. Mr. Wu woke up his wife and told her the story. The two parents, deeply moved by their son's unselfish concern for them, began to cry. They were so touched, their sounds of sobbing could be heard by the neighbors. From all sides the neighbors gathered to investigate the matter, and learned about Wu Meng's sacrifice on behalf of his parents.*

*Everyone thought that the boy's attitude of filial respect was most remarkable, especially for one only eight years old. Someone reported the incident to the local magistrate, who wrote a memorandum to the Dragon Throne, to inform the imperial court. The matter thus came to the attention of the Emperor, who rewarded Wu Meng with a scholarship to the academy. Further, he gave the family a set of mosquito nets and a stipend, so that they never again lacked the necessities of life.*

*A verse in his honor says,*

*Summer nights and no mosquito netting!  
Insects by the thousands, yet he wouldn't raise a hand.  
"Let them drink my blood and fill their bellies,  
Just don't disturb my parents while they sleep!"*

### **Commentary:**

In this story, Wu Meng not only showed exemplary filial piety, but also displayed immense compassion for not feeling hatred towards the mosquitoes or finding ways to do violence against them. Even though mosquitoes are small, they can still feel pain just like us. For instance, the great Zen Master Hsu Yun once heard (while meditating) a flea scream out in pain after being flicked off by a fellow cultivator—its limbs had been broken. Thus, all life is equally important and all pains are equally painful. Therefore, whenever we are tempted to kill a mosquito, we must instead ask ourselves if we would kill a man or break his limbs simply because he was annoying.

Furthermore, Wu Meng's filial piety, compassion and patience quickly melted away the evil past karma that caused their poverty while also generating abundant stocks of merit. This is why he and his family quickly received karmic fruits such as the generous stipend, good reputation and scholarship. In those days, a person who completed his education at schools run by the central government were granted magistracies. Therefore, the entire family was elevated to noble status due to Wu Meng's actions. If Wu Meng had been selfish, he would have lived and died in poverty. Thus, if we wish for good fortune and Bodhi, we must start at home. We should teach the Dharma to our parents and family, do our best to improve their lives, encourage them to practice good deeds and teach our children to be filial and moral.

Lastly, Wu Meng would not have been so filial at such a young age if his parents had neglected to give him a proper natal education. It was only because his parents had recited sacred texts, remained celibate and acted with propriety during and after the pregnancy that Wu Meng was able to have such genuine goodness. Thus, the deeper message of this story is that a stable and prosperous society can only be achieved when natal and early moral education is practiced by all parents.

If children are aged seven or above before being truly educated, it would be too late. Already influenced by their parent's bad habits or wrong views, their minds harden like soil under a scorching sun. With no good habits to guide them, few will grow up to be Sages. Instead, those with some past merit will commit sins while pursuing luxury, wealth, status and power. Those without merits will be bereft and struggle through life not knowing how to do good and change their karmic situation. No one will take the laws of karma seriously and all will follow their passions. All this is because parents failed to unceasingly impart the wisdom of the Sages to their offspring at a time when they were still innocent and impressionable.

### **A Important Reminder:**

**"The workings of karma are like gravity, invisible but all pervasive. Look around you, fathers inevitably shed tears for their deceased offspring while children weep over their late parents. Siblings and couples all become grief stricken when the one they love is lost. They do not know that their attachments are false and impermanent. Consumed by love and emotion, they are shackled to the Samsara. Consequently, they squander their years and neglect to diligently and properly cultivate the Dharma. Few become Sages while many drown in their own delusions."**

### **- Chapter 33, Infinite Life Sutra**

Therefore, as important as family and filial piety is, we must always remember to remain unattached to our family members. Filial piety and Confucian family values are about precepts and not emotionalism. Sages never promote attachments but advocate only duty and true compassion.

The following abridged excerpt from the Shurangama Sutra elaborates what the Buddha says above:

*"Actually, Ananda, all beings are fundamentally true and pure, but because of their false views they give rise to the falseness of habits, which are divided into an internal aspect and an external aspect."*

*"Ananda, the internal aspect refers to what occurs inside living beings. **Because of love and defilement, they produce the falseness of emotions. When these emotions accumulate without cease, they can create the fluids of love. That is why living beings' mouths water when they think about delicious food. When they think about a deceased person, either with fondness or with anger, tears will flow from their eyes.....** When their minds dwell on lustful conduct, spontaneous secretions will come from the male or female organ. Ananda, although the kinds of love differ, their flow and formation is the same. With this moisture, one cannot ascend, but will naturally fall. This is called the Internal Aspect."*

Thus, while the Sages and Upasakas of the past have always been filial and loyal to their families, they are actually completely unattached and unemotional. Their bodies may be at home, but their hearts have already left the Samsara and the home life. Therefore, we must not mistake filial piety and family loyalty to mean emotional attachment. We must always be practical and calm. The truth is that love leads to hate

and hate leads to love. These defilements and emotions are the fuel that drives the repetitive cycle of birth and death. For instance, Master Hsuan Hua has stated that grandparents who cannot let go of their grandchildren will be reborn as their children or spouses. However, if the grandchild proves to be a disloyal spouse or abusive parent, then the love will turn to hate. Such false habits and emotions will only cause one to fall into the evil paths.

Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the reason people are reborn together as family is due to past karmic debts and credits. For example, if you owe someone a favor for kindness shown in past lives, you will likely be reborn as a loving spouse or parent to the person you owe kindness to. If someone owes you money in past lives, you will most likely be reborn as that person's offspring and heir. Once the debt or favor has been repaid, the relationship naturally ends and any remaining affection usually disappears as new karmic relationships manifest. Thus, there really is nothing to be attached to.

This is not to say that we should disregard our obligations towards our family, it simply means that we should not be emotional. Filial piety is a virtue that mindfulness is built on, and no virtue can be successfully observed with emotionalism.

Furthermore, as every one of us have been turning in the Samsara since time immemorial, all the innumerable sentient beings in existence have at some point been our family members. Hence, we should cultivate the true compassion harbored by Bodhisattvas while shedding the false emotional partialities rooted in the three poisons. For instance, if you achieve Bodhi, countless generations of your family (including those of prior rebirths) will share your merits and become devas or Sages!

Consequently, we must always remember that filial piety and Confucian family values are precepts that require forbearance to observe. Buddhism is based on Sila Samadhi and Prajna. Hence, we must always hold these principles close to heart and examine our own conduct in accordance with it.



## VEN. MASTER HAI XIAN: A MODERN CASE OF PURELAND REBIRTH



Venerable Master Hai Xian

*Every drop of detail in the Infinite Life Sutra can be found displayed in his daily conduct. He is the Infinite Life Sutra and the Sutra is him. His life of cultivation will serve as a beacon of light for thousands of years to come.*

-Ven. Master Chin Kung on Venerable Master Hai Xian

信                      願                      行

FAITH            WILLINGNESS    ACTION

If one wishes to summarize the Buddha's advice in the Infinite Life Sutra, the above three words would suffice. Anyone who wishes to take advantage of Amita Buddha's Forty Eight Vows must have faith in Pureland and be willing to recite Amita Buddha's name to the level of single-mindedness. Furthermore, in the chapter where the Buddha outlined the three grades of successful aspirants, all three demonstrated these three tenets. However, in Chapter 41, all three types of persons who failed to leave the Samsara had either insufficient faith or a lack of willingness to act. Hence, doubt, inconsistent effort or lack of action will handicap your potential and must be eliminated. Therefore, we are now going to study the life story of someone who has succeeded by practicing this Sutra.

Venerable Master Hai Xian (海賢老和尚) attained Pureland rebirth last year at the

venerable age of 112. In fact, he was still plowing the temple fields on the eve of his Pureland rebirth despite his advanced age. Amazingly, he managed to successfully practice mindfulness of Amita Buddha for his whole life, even in the face of the chaos of the Chinese Civil War, WWII, Cultural Revolution and various other hardships such as illiteracy, misfortune and poverty. More importantly, he achieved all this because he was single-minded in his practice. His unwavering faith and willingness to act ensured that he was able to attain the level of single-mindedness within three years of his ordination. Thus, his life story is a living example of this Sutra. His conduct mirrors every virtue and instruction described by the Buddha in this Sutra. He is a Bodhisattva of Pureland and belongs to the highest grade of aspirants.

Venerable Hai Xian attained Pureland rebirth during the wee hours of January 17th 2013, a time and date he foreknew. Those who have recited the name of Amita Buddha to the level of single-mindedness will be able to meet Amita Buddha, who will either welcome them into Pureland or give them an option to choose a later date. Since Venerable Hai Xian's mindfulness had by then far surpassed this level, he had already met Amita Buddha numerous times before. However, he was requested to remain in this world in each of those earlier encounters because his exemplary conduct meant that his presence was needed to inspire confidence—to serve as a beacon of light for cultivators to emulate.

Furthermore, he has also been nominated to succeed the Great Master Yin Guang as the 14th Patriarch of the Pureland School by Venerable Master Chin Kung.

Therefore, all cultivators of Pureland Buddhism should watch this documentary and strive to emulate the late Master's exemplary faith and diligence in reciting Amita Buddha's name.

**Link to Documentary:** <http://edu.hwadzan.com/play/65/34/0/87285>

**Version with English subtitles:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoritpHKxm4>

## BIOGRAPHY:

### Childhood and Early Life:

Venerable Master Hai Xian (1901-2013) was born in Henan province on August 19th 1901 to a devout Buddhist family. His birth name was Wen Chuan Xian (文川賢) and he had five siblings. The family was poor and young Chuan Xian's father often had to travel to neighboring villages to ask for alms. When Chuan Xian was ten years old, his father was beaten to death by bandits while trying to put out a raging fire set by his murderers (they had torched a entire village while plundering it). The returning villagers sent his body home to be buried with honors.

When Chuan Xian reached adolescence, he experienced and observed several events which strengthened his faith in Buddhism. For instance, in one case, a relative of his who delighted in verbally and physically abusing another family member eventually gave birth successively to four children who all died young. Furthermore, she became mentally unstable and bit her own tongue out. Finally, she died in agony shortly after giving birth to a daughter. She was only thirty two years old at the time of death.

It was eventually understood that her short life and misfortunes were due to the evil karma created by her malicious speech and violent behavior.

When Chuan Xian reached the age of 18, he developed carbuncles (large boils) on his leg. It was so severe that the leg became gangrenous and his life was threatened. His mother consulted numerous doctors and tried all kinds of treatments, but all to no avail. Finally, Chuan Xian realized that this illness was the result of past evil karma and refused further treatment. He then sincerely recited the name of Guanyin Bodhisattva. Miraculously, the leg healed completely by the end of the month.

These experiences and events prompted him to seriously consider the pain and suffering of the wheel of rebirth. Just like Dharmakara in Chapter 4, Chuan Xian now understood the following:

**The Eighth Discernment is this: The Samsara is a raging inferno plagued by endless afflictions. Hence, resolve upon the Mahayana aspiration to liberate all beings. Vow to bear the unbearable for the sake of helping sentient beings achieve ultimate bliss.**

Moreover, his faith in the Buddhadharma and the laws of karma were now strong and resolute.

### **Life as a Monk**

When Chuan Xian turned twenty years of age, he decided to leave the home life and become a monk. Thus, he bid his mother farewell and was ordained in 1920 by the eminent Dharma Master Chwan Jie (傳戒法師). Henceforth, he was known as Venerable Hai Xian. Master Chwan Jie did not teach him to practice Zen or to study and speak the Dharma. He simply taught Venerable Hai Xian to single-mindedly recite the name of Amitabha. Venerable Hai Xian, being as faithful as Patriarch Huineng (who was illiterate like him), diligently cultivated as instructed. What many people do not know is that the name of Amita Buddha represents one's Buddha-nature. When Patriarch Huineng said that the Buddha-nature is self sufficient, he is referring to that when a man's heart is the same as Amita Buddha, he has attained the mind seal of the Buddha. Hence, such a person no longer has outflows and is pure.

In fact, all the great sutras such as the Lotus Sutra and Shurangama Sutra are simply a expansion of the name of Amita Buddha. They were spoken to serve as an indirect way for people who still have doubt to gradually believe in the unsurpassed perfection of reciting Amita Buddha's name. This is why the Shurangama Sutra ends by mentioning that anyone who merely thinks about teaching the Shurangama Sutra to someone can have all their heavy offenses eradicated and be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. The name of Amita Buddha represents the infinite merit and wisdom of all the Buddhas.

Hence, Master Chwan Jie recognized Venerable Hai Xian's faith and determination and thus passed to him the highest Dharma. Since Hai Xian's heart was always mindful of Amita Buddha, his conduct naturally conformed with that of a Buddha.

For instance, he cultivated each the Six Paramitas perfectly without exception. As his heart reflected Amita Buddha, he was naturally not subject to the urges and defilements that cause regular people to turn their backs on the five precepts and ten virtues. His heart was pure and free from the six kinds of dust.

In Upasaka Huang Nien Tsu's commentary on this Sutra, it is mentioned that there are four different fields of merit:

- 1) The field of gratitude (i.e. one's parents and teachers).
- 2) The triple jewel field (i.e. Buddhadharma).
- 3) The field of the poor, sick and needy.
- 4) The field of animals.

Thus, in terms of generosity, he diligently planted in all four fields of merit. For instance, when the Red Guards came to vandalize the Stupa of his mentor, Master Hai Xian managed to retrieve beforehand the ashes of his mentor and hid them in a secret compartment. When the Communist government forbade him from reciting and forced him to serve as a superintendent for a local farming team, he continued to be mindful of Amita Buddha in his heart and prostrated to the Buddha at night. If there was meat in the communal pot, he would eat only the vegetables around it. As soon as the Cultural Revolution ended, he immediately returned to the temple and built a new Stupa for his mentor. He also invited his aged mother into the small temple where he resided and cared for her until she attained Pureland rebirth.

Furthermore, throughout his life, he never ceased to be assiduous with his duties. Being a farmer by former profession, he diligently cultivated many wildlands into tillable farmland. With the crops he grew by himself, he fed his aged fellow cultivators and the poor, old and needy. In fact, he once donated about half a ton of crops that he personally grew to relieve those affected by the 1989 floods.

Moreover, he regularly released life and helped repair bridges. He also led the building of new temples. Even when he spotted someone stealing some of the corn he grew, he did not become hostile but generously gifted the thief the cream of the crop. Such conduct reflects the compassionate behavior of Bodhisattvas as described in the Sutra of the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men:

**The Sixth Discernment is this: Poverty and deprivation leads to countless grievances and unrest. When Bodhisattvas practice almsgiving, they consider foes to be equal to their dearest kinsmen. They neither harbor grudges nor ostracize criminals.**

As the name of Amita Buddha is self sufficient, one whose heart is in accordance with it will naturally display virtue, wisdom and equanimity at all times. This is why Venerable Hai Xian did not react with anger even when an arrogant man slapped him in the face. Also, in Chapter 33, the Buddha mentions that:

**"When interacting with others, we must know that even a small disagreement now may escalate into a mass of hostility in the lives to come. Thus, we must be careful. Those who antagonize and humiliate others will eventually be reborn together with their victims and suffer their vengeance."**

Likewise, the Venerable Master Chin Kung often stresses that competition leads to quarrels which later develops into wars. This is why forbearance is so important in Buddhism. However, it is very hard to exercise patience while still afflicted by passions. Hence, the only solution is to recite the name of Amita Buddha single-mindedly. Only with this samadhi can we avoid piling up karmic enemies. Furthermore, the merits created would be so great that all existing karmic enemies will instantly become friends. As our creditors, they naturally benefit from the blessings we create.

In all of his 112 years of life, Venerable Hai Xian lived simply. He sewed his own clothes and grew his own food. If he received offerings, he would use it to print sutras and release life. On his birthday the year before his Pureland rebirth, a group of householders prepared a sumptuous meal as a birthday gift. For the first time in his life, Venerable Hai Xian did not smile and declined to eat any of it except for a few sprouts. The householders soon realized that he was teaching them by example. As the Buddha's last advice to the Sangha before his parinirvana was that one should regard the precepts as one's teacher and hardship as nourishment, such a display of austerity reflected this key advice.

In Chapter 34 of this Sutra, it is mentioned that birth, death, sickness and old age are all agonizing pains. Furthermore, the Buddha also stressed that only Pureland rebirth can free us from them. Venerable Hai Xian's life proves this to us. Ever since he was able to single-mindedly recite Amita Buddha's name, he became free of those agonizing pains forever. He will never have to undergo birth again as those who are reborn in Pureland manifest by transformation. Moreover, sickness and old age cannot bother him as his mindfulness of Amita Buddha allows him to dwell in the bliss of samadhi.

### Rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss



Prior to his Pureland rebirth, Amita Buddha appeared before him and informed him that he will be reborn in Pureland when he receives a Dharma book titled "If Buddhism is to Prosper ; Practitioners Must Praise Each other" (若要佛法興唯有僧贊僧).

On January 13th 2013, a visiting guest gifted the book to Venerable Hai Xian. He immediately donned his best robes and requested that a picture be taken of him with the book (see picture). This gesture—he had never before asked to be photographed—was to serve as an endorsement for the book, which has decisively neutralized recent libel against Upasaka Xia's Infinite Life Sutra. Hence, we too should take the book's main advice and refrain from criticizing others. We should praise all practitioners of all branches of Buddhism and promote interfaith harmony.

In the three following days, Venerable Hai Xian visited a number of his old friends and acquaintances. Even on the afternoon of the third day, he was still working in the temple fields. When one concerned junior monk asked him to retire, he cryptically responded, "I 'm almost finished, when I am, I'll be done for good." That night, Venerable Hai Xian loudly recited the name of Amita Buddha continuously. By morning, he was discovered to have already entered the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Just like the recorded signs of Pureland rebirth in the various sutras—rigor mortis did not set in and his body remained soft, flexible and fresh. Incidentally, like Bodhidharma, Venerable Hai Xian's mother's coffin was empty except for a shoe when it was exhumed for a more proper reburial.

Hence, knowing this, we should have absolute faith in our ability to attain Pureland rebirth. Everything that Venerable Master Hai Xian achieved, he did it for us. He has unequivocally shown us the Buddha's words are true. He could have left for Pureland when he was in his 20s, but he stayed to show us the way. Therefore, we must repay such kindness by heeding the important lessons he has taught us by example.

Lastly, during Venerable Hai Xian's funeral ceremony, one attending Dharma Master mentioned Venerable Hai Xian's encounter with a wolf in his eulogy. One day when Venerable Hai Xian was journeying, a wolf came up to him and proceeded to gently drag him by his robes. He initially thought that this was his moment of death and thus diligently recited the Buddha's name. However, it soon became apparent that the wolf simply wished to request his help. The wolf led Venerable Hai Xian back to its den where a female wolf was on the verge of death due to complications of labor. Venerable Hai Xian speedily recited the name of Amita Buddha to the female wolf. The merit from his mindfulness instantly saved the life of the female wolf, allowing it to safely give birth to a litter of cubs. The next day, the wolf appeared again and offered honeycombs in gratitude to Venerable Hai Xian.

Thus, if even a wolf can recognize virtue and repay kindness, how can we (as humans) neglect to repay the kindness of Venerable Master Hai Xian and heed his example?

Buddhism is about turning the great Dharma Wheel. Hence, we must strive to cultivate in accordance with Venerable Hai Xian's teachings. We should first recite to single-mindedness ourselves and then turn to helping others. We repay the kindness of Master Hai Xian by becoming Sages ourselves. We turn the great Dharma Wheel by becoming an example for other people to emulate.



## IMPORTANT LESSONS

The most important lesson that Venerable Hai Xian's life teaches us is the importance of faithfully and single-mindedly reciting Amita Buddha's name. As mentioned before, the Buddha-nature is self sufficient and Amita Buddha is our Buddha-nature. This means that this Buddha name represents the Six Paramitas, Four Immeasurables and Threefold Training all in one. Thus, by reciting Amita Buddha's name to the level of single-mindedness, you are recovering the infinite stock of merit, utmost virtue and unsurpassed wisdom that our Buddha-nature contains. You can only meet Amita Buddha when your heart finally matches the Buddha's and yearns for Pureland rebirth. The Buddha is absolutely compassionate and will certainly respond if you truly seek him.

**"Of all good deeds, which is the foremost? The answer is that rectifying one's heart and mind is the greatest good. Your body can commit no evil if your heart is pure. Do this and you will be in accordance with all that which is good and virtuous."**

**- Chapter 36, Infinite Life Sutra**

In short, the meaning of this important passage is that the greatest good is to recite Namo Amita Buddha to the level of single-mindedness.

The biggest mistakes cultivators make nowadays is to seek the external instead of from within. We do this and do that—we feel that we need to read that sutra, donate to this cause or receive those precepts. We do this for a little while and that for a little while. Then we complain that the Buddha does not respond. The truth is that the fault lies with ourselves. We are not sincere and our senses still connect with the six kinds of dust. Hence, we think we are seeking the Buddha and Pureland, but our scattered efforts and thoughts are simply asking for the six kinds of dust.

However, if we achieve single-minded concentration in Amita Buddha, we become self sufficient and can no longer be bothered by attachments and aversions. With such Non-abidance, we will effortlessly display all of the Six Paramitas and Four Immeasurables without fail. This is because all virtues and good works naturally spring from one who has accessed the Buddha-nature.

This is the point that Venerable Hai Xian is trying to teach us. He did the humanly impossible and bore unbearable burdens during his 112 years of life. However, he did

not suffer even a hair's breadth worth of stress. This is because he found the inner bliss of the Buddha-nature while we seek false bliss and distractions from the outside. He never planned or examined any of his own actions since he had already transcended intent. He did so by reciting Amita Buddha's name to the levels of single-mindedness and profound concentration. By simply resisting all scattered thoughts, doubts and the temptations of the six kinds of dust during his first few years as a monk, he achieved Sagehood. Thus, everything he achieved afterwards simply flowed from his Buddha-nature.

Thus, the main lesson here is that we need to focus. As mentioned before, sincerely reciting the name of Amita Buddha represents cultivating Sila, Samadhi and Prajna all at once. Thus, we should strive to recite it always. We must not be distracted by mundane urges and doubts. Further, we should not feel the need to reinforce our Buddha recitation with other good deeds or practices. We should just diligently recite towards single-mindedness. Unwavering faith and concentration is the key to doing so. Fortitude is the shield that maintains our efforts.

*"the key to success is to cultivate one Dharma-door unceasingly"*

- Venerable Master Chin Kung

**Venerable Hai Xian Epitaph (Written by Venerable Master Chin Kung)**

賢公和尚，佛門榜樣。不事經懺，遠離利養。嚴持戒律，四眾欽仰。老實念佛，道在平常。淨土大經，諸佛祕藏。一句彌陀，甚深妙禪。百一十二，老當益壯。唯僧讚僧，法門興旺。弘普賢願，表法離障。續佛慧命，功德無量。自在往生，倒駕慈航。

**Venerable Sage and model of virtue, you are a beacon of light in the darkness. Despite hardships, you were never even once tempted by pomp and profit. Strictly adhering to the precepts, you are a model for both monks and laymen. With faith and sincerity, you recited the Buddha's name. Principles of the Way were reflected in your every move. The Dharma door of Pureland is the Buddha's highest wisdom. With the name of Amitabha, you found your Buddha-nature and dwelled in the highest Samadhi. Even as your age rose above one hundred, your strength only increased. With mutual praise, Buddhism will prosper. You have cultivated the vows of Samantabhadra and showed us the way pass karmic obstacles. You turned the great Dharma Wheel, reaped boundless merits and serenely achieved rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. You have fulfilled your Mahayana vows.**

## A FINAL WORD

It is said that human rebirth is rare and the proper Dharma is hard to meet. Hence, we must treasure our time here and diligently recite Namó Amita Buddha to the level of single-mindedness. At that level, the only thing on our minds should be one recitation after another. Such samadhi will allow us to meet Amita Buddha and be welcomed into Pureland, thereby ending all our pain and suffering.

Even if we cannot recite this Buddha name to single mindedness, we can still be reborn in Pureland if we let it all go and become mindful of Amita Buddha during our last moments—wishing for him to appear and take us to Pureland.

According to the Shurangama Sutra, we will suddenly see all the good and evil that we have done in this life during our moment of death. Moreover, the Earth Store Sutra also mentions that when people of this world are about to die, they are often in a haze and unable to concentrate. This is similar to how we involuntarily recollect our day in our dreams. Hence, this is why it is so important to regularly recite the name of Amita Buddha. Doing so will help us recollect his name during our moment of death, thereby allowing us to attain Pureland rebirth by being mindful of the Buddha at the last moment. Furthermore, the merits acquired will allow us to stay clear minded at the moment of death. This will ensure that our mindfulness will not be distracted by evil ghosts or manifestations of evil karma at that critical juncture.

Also, this is the reason why we need to recite the name of Amita Buddha to the dead and dying. Even if a person has died, it is likely that the consciousness has not yet left the body (it usually leaves 8-12 hours later). Hence, it is important to not disturb the body and to recite Amita Buddha's name to them during this time. This will allow their consciousness to remain calm and become mindful of the Buddha. Furthermore, the 26th Vow of Amita Buddha also states that those who merely perceive his name will have a splendid rebirth even if they do not leave the Samsara. As a person's hearing is the last faculty to fail, their consciousness can still hear for the full 8-12 hour period after their breathing stops.

In conclusion, we must recite the name of Amita Buddha continuously and through thick and thin. We may meet stress, anxieties and obstacles tomorrow, but we must never stop sincerely reciting his name. It is the solution to all of our problems. This Mantra will cut through all of our afflictions and troubles like a knife through warm butter.

Moreover, it is perfectly acceptable to recite the name of Amita Buddha in any language and variation. Lastly, it is our duty to turn the great Dharma Wheel. Thus, we should all strive to make the Buddha's words known to others whenever the opportunity presents itself. The merits derived from doing so will be without compare.

**Namo Amitufo!**

**Namo Amitufo!**

**Namo Amitufo!**

## MAHASTHAMAPRAPTA'S TREATISE ON PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH MINDFULNESS OF AMITAYUS

As Mahasthamaprapta, a prince of Dharma, arose from his seat, the 52 Bodhisattvas who formed his august retinue immediately followed suit. He and his retinue proceeded to reverently prostrate before the Buddha. His Serene Highness then spoke the following to the assembly:

"In a time before time immemorial, a Buddha titled Infinite Light appeared in this world. He was the first of twelve Buddhas who emerged in the that kalpa. The last one was a Buddha whose glorious light outshined the majestic brightness of both the Sun and the Moon. Thus, he was known as the Brightness Upon the Sun and the Moon Buddha."

"That Buddha personally taught me the Mindfulness of Amitayus Samadhi. For example, if a father who adores his son should have a son who does not requite, then the son's back will always be turned on his father. However, if both father and son were to yearn for each other, and if they unceasingly cherish thoughts of each other, then not even death could separate them. They will be together for life after life like a shadow following the form. The Buddhas of the ten quarters are like the father. They constantly show tender concern towards sentient beings who rarely requite. If those sentient beings could instead single-mindedly hold the Buddha's name, they will surely meet the Buddha. The Buddha's hands are always extended, but it is up to you to grasp it."

"Furthermore, if a man were to habitually burn scented incense, his person will naturally exude fragrant aromas. Likewise, a man who is mindful of the Buddha's name will be adorned with the Buddha's infinite light and merit. Hence, it was through such mindfulness that I gained insight into the fact that all dharmas neither arise nor cease. Today in this world, I tirelessly exhort all to faithfully practice the Dharma-door of Pure Land. There is no better way to attain Perfect Enlightenment and the state of no outflows than by pure and unceasing mindfulness of Amitayus. Such Samadhi is the foremost."

### **Commentary:**

This treatise, which is the last paragraph of Chapter 5 of the Shurangama Sutra, is one of the five principle texts of Pureland Buddhism. It was added to the original four by Master Yin Guang during the early 20th century. In fact, it was later determined after Master Yin Guang's passing that he was actually Mahasthamaprapta manifesting in human form! Thus, this treatise represents the Buddha's timely gift of Dharma to us all. It is also the most important part of the Shurangama Sutra.

In this treatise, Mahasthamaprapta concisely explains the mechanics behind single-mindedly reciting Amita Buddha's name. The example of the father and the son is a masterful choice of words as it explains the level of devotion required in a way that most people can relate to. If we (i.e. the son) can yearn for the Buddha (i.e. the father) as strongly as a father loves his child, we will certainly achieve single-mindedness.

Moreover, the deeper meaning of this treatise is that all roads lead to Amita Buddha. As we have discussed before, the Shurangama Sutra is only nominally about Zen and the Shurangama Mantra. In truth, it actually about Amita Buddha Pureland Buddhism. That is why there are so many hints of Pureland Buddhism in it.

In fact, each and every one of the 84,000 Dharma-doors were spoken by the Buddha to gradually convert sentient beings towards the Dharma-door of Amita Buddha's Pureland. For instance, in the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's commentary on the Shurangama Sutra, in the section that addresses the part of the Sutra where the Buddha states that he appears in different forms to teach different sentient beings, an excerpt goes:

### **Sutra:**

***"If there are living beings who wish to be the Heavenly Lord, leader of heavenly beings, I will appear before them in the body of Shakra and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish."***

### **Commentary:**

*"If there are living beings who wish to be the Heavenly*

*Lord": this refers to the Christian God. They want to be the "leader of heavenly beings." They want to rule the heavens. "I will appear before them in the body of Shakra and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish their wish. I will manifest as Shakra for that kind of living being." Shakra is the Heavenly Lord - God.*

*Did you know that the Holy Mother of Catholicism is Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva? Catholics believe in the Holy Mother, because they want to be born in the heavens. So Gwan Yin Bodhisattva manifests as a goddess to teach and transform them, enabling them to be born in the heavens. Of course, they will have to come back again from the heavens, but gradually they will make progress. Why does Gwan Yin manifest and speak a dharma to help people get born in the heavens? His ultimate aim is to get them to believe in the Buddha. But since at present their wish is to be born in the heavens, he teaches them how to get reborn there. When they return from there, they will eventually come to believe in the Buddha. Ordinary people feel that the time involved in this process is quite long, but actually in the Buddhas' eyes, it is a mere moment, a blink of an eye.*

*This method can be likened to that of parents who want their child to master an excellent profession, but whose child does not wish to study that profession. The parents comply and allow the child to study what he wishes, but after several false starts, he eventually winds up studying that excellent profession his parents suggested. Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's method for teaching and transforming living beings is to fulfill whatever wishes they might have. But the ultimate aim is always to bring living beings to the accomplishment of Buddhahood.*

Therefore, it should be clear by now that all the major religions were founded by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Since the respective audiences could not yet accept the Buddhadharma, the Buddhas and Sages spoke alternatives such as Christianity or Taoism instead. Eventually, they will progress up to Zen or the Flower Adornment Sutra. Finally, they will practice Pureland Buddhism. Hence, all religions are one and there are no grounds for discrimination or religious conflict. This is why the

Venerable Master Chin Kung donates generous portions of the offerings he receives to Catholic charities every month. While most people believe that merit making in Buddhism is based on meditation—generosity towards the poor is actually a major tenet of Buddhism. For instance, according to the Earth Store Sutra:

*"Moreover, Earth Store, in the future, leaders of nations, Brahmans, and others may have compassionate thoughts upon seeing the old, the sick, or women in childbirth, and may provide them with medicinal herbs, food, drink, and bedding so as to make them peaceful and comfortable. The blessings and benefits derived from doing that are quite inconceivable. For one thousand eons they will always be lords of the Pure Dwelling Heavens. For two hundred eons they will be lords in the Six Desire Heavens, and they will ultimately attain Buddhahood. They will never fall into the Evil Paths, and for hundreds of thousands of lives they will hear no sounds of suffering."*

Thus, if you look closely, the conduct of Catholic Saints clearly reflect the conduct of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Take Saint Jeanne Jugan as an example, she was the founder of the Little Sisters of the Poor—a Roman Catholic charity that cares for the impoverished elderly.

Jeanne Jugan (1792-1879) was a pious nun who spent her entire life dedicated to helping the poor and sick. During the winter of 1839, she came across an elderly, severely disabled and homeless woman named Anne Chauvin. Jeanne carried Anne back to her apartment and took her in—she even let her have the only bed while she slept in the attic. Jeanne continued and expanded her work with the help of her colleagues. Thus, the Little Sisters of the Poor congregation was born. Every day, they went door to door asking for donations of food, clothing and money for the elderly women under their care. In one incident—a young man slapped her across the face. Instead of reacting with anger, she calmly replied, "You gave that to me, now please give something to the elderly". Deeply moved by the sweetness of her response, the young man donated all the money he had towards her cause.

Although she had founded the congregation, she was not allowed to lead it. Instead, Abbe Auguste Le Pailleur—the appointed Superior General—deprived her of any significant roles and later forced her to retire. He then attempted to take credit for her work. Even when faced with such adversity, she simply replied, "You have taken my life's work from me, but I gladly give it to you".

In the Diamond Sutra, a passage of paramount importance goes:



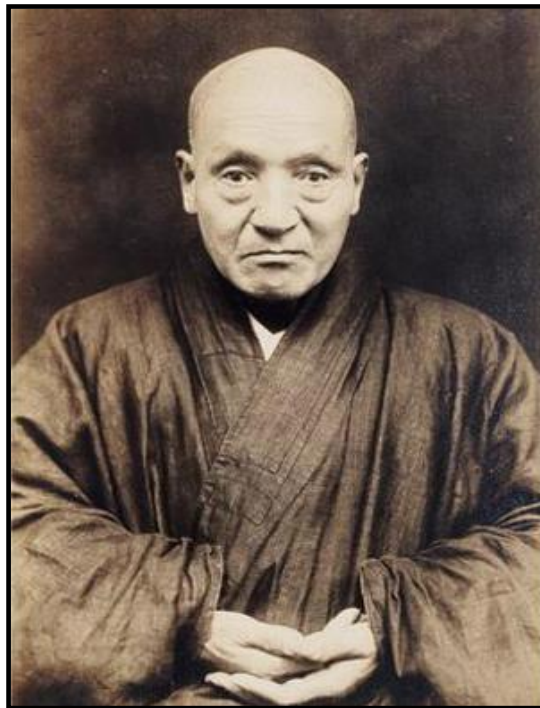
*"Subhuti, If a Bodhisattva practices generosity by donating precious metals and stones as numerous as there are sand grains in the Ganges, his merit would still be vastly inferior to the Bodhisattva who understands that the ego is false and all Dharmas are attained by forbearance."*

Hence, we can see that Saint Jeanne Jugan's conduct confirms fully with the part of the passage that is underlined (which defines the mentality of Mahabodhisattvas). She was selfless and showed forbearance always. She was not attached to prestige or even basic self interest. She simply did all she could to help the poor and needy. Such is the conduct of Guan Yin Bodhisattva.

Lastly, as all roads lead to Amita Buddha, we should all resolve to take the short cut and sincerely seek Pureland rebirth. By doing so, we will attain Bodhi within one life. Afterwards, we can simultaneously save innumerable sentient beings across the ten directions. If they seek the Dharma, we can explain it to them using the myriads of expedient devices at our disposal. If they need alms, we can furnish them with whatever they lack. For instance, when Shakyamuni Buddha was still a Bodhisattva, he once used his powers to retrieve a wish-fulfilling jewel for the purpose of allowing everyone on the entire continent of Jambudvipa to benefit from endless treasures.

If we achieve rebirth in Pureland, we will instantly become Mahabodhisattvas with powers equal to that of Amita Buddha. Hence, there would be nothing we could not do to benefit each and every sentient being living across the ten quarters.

### PATRIARCH YIN GUANG'S EXHORTATION



**Patriarch Yin Guang (1861-1940)**

**"Whether we are layman or ordained, we must respect our superiors and show kindness to our subordinates. We must bear what others cannot bear and practice what others are too weak to cultivate. We must shoulder the burdens of other people and help others succeed in their cultivation."**

**"During solitary moments, we must self reflect and repent. However, we should never prattle about the mistakes or scandals of others."**

**"We must be mindful of Amita Buddha from dawn to dusk and dusk to dawn. It makes no difference whether we are undertaking great feats or engaged in mundane daily chores, we must unceasingly recite the Buddha's name."**

**"When we are reciting—whether loudly, quietly or silently—we must refrain from entertaining false and wandering thoughts. There should not be a single thought which is not the Buddha's name in our minds. If false and wandering thoughts arise, dispel them immediately."**

**"Always feel remorse and be penitent. Even if we are skilled in cultivation, we must be humble and regard our own abilities as inferior. Never should we indulge in superbia."**

**"Instead of prying into the affairs or feuds of others, we should focus on ordering our own house. Furthermore, we should see only the merits of others, and not their faults or evils."**

**"For humility's sake, we must consider everyone else to be exalted Bodhisattvas—but ourselves as mere mortals."**

**"Those who observe these instructions will definitely achieve rebirth in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss."**

**BUDDHISM IS NONE OTHER THAN CULTIVATING VIRTUE,  
DISCARDING VICES AND PURIFYING THE MIND.**

**NAMO AMITABHA!**

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Everything written herein is known to us because of their noble efforts. If I have written anything good, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants.

**Namo Amitufo!**

